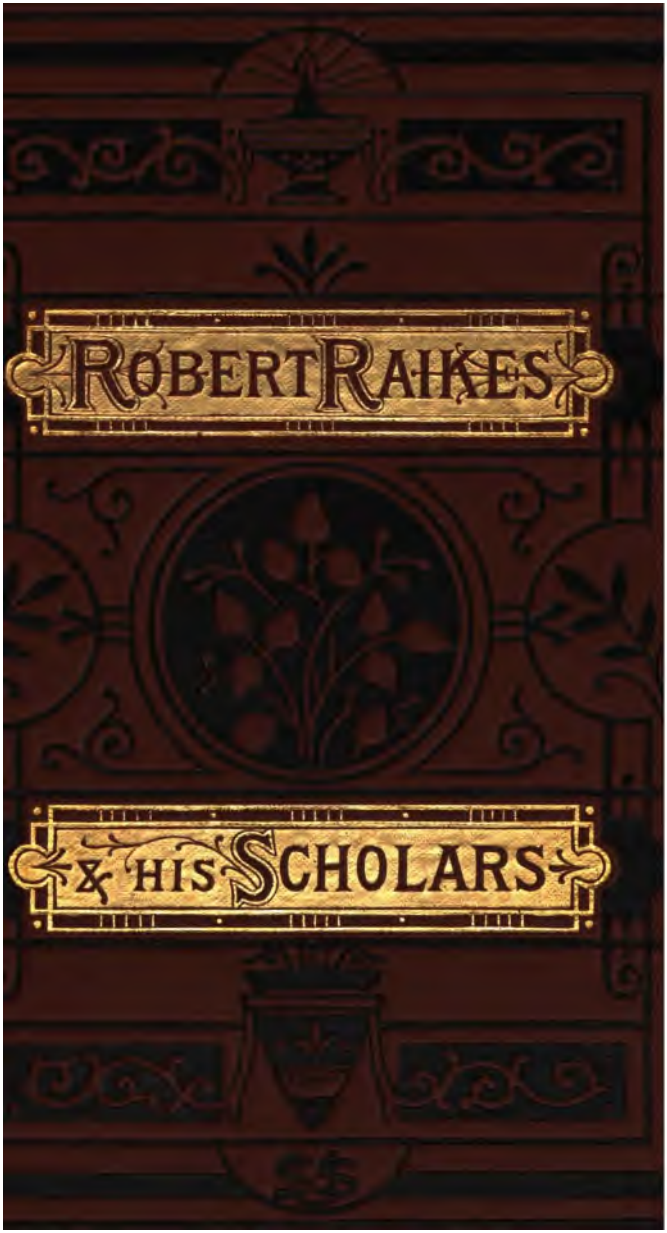
ROBERT RAIKES
& HIS SCHOLARS

RAIKES, AND HIS SCHOLARS.

THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

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ROBERT RAIKES,

And his Scholars.

BY

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ROBERT RAIKES AND HIS SCHOLARS.

CHAPTER I.

GLOUCESTER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

EVERY young person who has learnt geography will know that Gloucestershire is one of the western counties of England, and that its chief city is Gloucester, situated on the banks of the river Severn. It is, however, not now the largest city in the county, for Bristol, situated on the Avon, a branch of the Severn and near the Bristol Channel, is many times the size of Gloucester, and contains 182,500 inhabitants. It is also one of the principal sea port towns in England. But our story has nothing to

do with Bristol; for a hundred years ago something happened in the city of Gloucester which ought to make it famous for ever.

It was a beautiful town, even then ; and in olden times used to be called the bright or splendid city. It stands partly in a valley and partly on a slight ascent rising from it. The four principal streets cross each other, like the sails of a windmill, and point north, south, east, and west ; and at the end of each is a city gate. The streets, therefore, are named North Gate Street, South Gate Street, East Gate Street, and West Gate Street. Even in the time of William the Conqueror Gloucester had its cathedral and a castle. The latter has long since fallen into ruins, which still remain ; but the cathedral has been enlarged and beautified, and is still one of the largest in England. There is a marble monument in this cathedral to Edward II., who was so cruelly murdered in Berkeley Castle, situated sixteen miles from Gloucester.

There is also a whispering gallery in the cathedral, similar to that in St. Paul's, London, yet of a different form. On the wall of this gallery the following words are written :

"Doubt not that God who sits on high
Thy secret prayers can hear,
Since a dead wall so cunningly
Conveys soft whispers to the ear."

For many years before the time of which we write, a portion of the castle which still remained was used as a prison, the walls being washed by the Severn. There was also the City Prison, an old building forming a part of the North Gate. We shall hear more about these prisons as our story proceeds.

It is with the boys and girls of Gloucester that we have to do now. But before introducing them to the reader, there is something to tell about pins, which will, perhaps, be amusing.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth, more than 300 years ago, the ladies fastened their dresses and their hair with wooden pegs, like small skewers. And this custom continued for many years, till, as it is said, a man named Tilsby, a native of Gloucester, invented pins, to be made of wire, and set up a pin factory in the city.

Strange to say, till the invention of machinery to work by steam, it required at least ten persons to make *one* pin! One made the wire of a proper thickness; a second cut it in lengths; a third smoothed it; a fourth made the head; a fifth put it on; a sixth formed the point; a seventh scrubbed the pins in water; the eighth dried them; the ninth polished them; and the tenth stuck them in the papers for sale in the shops. Now the greater portion of this work is done by machinery. Most

of the pin-makers of those days were boys and girls, who worked every day at the pin factory. This factory was situated in an open space near the river Severn, and in one of the worst parts of the city. The place was known as St. Catherine's Meadows, and seldom visited by the respectable inhabitants.

One day, however, a pleasant and benevolent looking gentleman might have been seen wending his way towards this locality. His dress would appear strange to us in these days; but his visit took place exactly one hundred years ago, in 1780, and the dress was then the fashion. He wore a full-bottomed powdered wig, and over it a black three-cornered hat. His coat, which had a very long waist and large pockets, hung far below his knees, to which the embroidered vest nearly reached. He wore also breeches with buckles at the knees, silk stockings and buckled shoes, while the cuffs of the coat sleeves covered the wrist, only allowing the lace ruffles to appear.

The gentleman thus attired continued his walk till he reached a neat looking cottage at a very little distance from the low neighbourhood round the pin factory, where the work-people lived. "Is your husband at home, Mrs. Lane?" he asked.

"No sir," she replied; "but can I do anything for you, sir?"

"Well, I want to speak to him about hiring a garden he has to let," replied the visitor.

"Oh then, sir, he'd best see you himself," she said. "He won't be long, if you'll step in and wait."

But the gentleman's eyes had been fixed on some waste ground near with looks of pity, and instead of complying with her request to step in, he said, "Do those wretched children belong to this part of the town, Mrs. Lane?"

"Ah! yes, sir, indeed they do," she replied; "and more's the pity, for those dirty rags scarcely cover the poor little wretches, and its dreadful to hear the language they use; but its nothing to-day to what this place is on Sundays. All the factory people and other working men are free on that day, and they spend their time in noise and riot, playing at chuck-farthing, and fighting and swearing so horribly, it makes me think sometimes that hell can't be much worse."

"Does not the clergyman of St. John's do anything to prevent all this?" asked the gentleman; "they're in his parish."

"Oh yes, sir, he's been very good; he's put some of 'em to school. But on Sundays they just do as they will, and their parents don't know any better, for some of them are drunkards and thieves, and don't care, and the children follow their

example. And oh, sir, their talk is so dreadful; I'm forced to shut the windows to keep out the sound of it."

Just at this moment the gardener returned, and the visitor having made arrangements with him about the garden he wished to have, took his leave and walked home, thinking deeply, not about his garden, but how he could do something for those poor, ragged, untaught, and ill-trained children. The next day he visited the gardener's wife again, and surprised her by saying:

"Mrs. Lane, I want you to help me in trying to reclaim those wretched children we saw yesterday. Can any of them read, do you think?"

"Not they, sir, excepting perhaps one here and there; and I don't think they'd care about learning."

"Well, I mean to try, at all events. Now, do you know any decent women that can read, who would be willing to teach these poor neglected children on a Sunday?"

Mrs. Lane reflected for a moment, and then said, "I think I do, sir, more than one; but on a Sunday, sir, oh, those wretches will never give up their horrid doings, I'm afraid. Besides, people don't keep schools on a Sunday."

Do our readers know that at the time of which we write there were no established Sunday Schools

in England or elsewhere? Boys and girls, whose parents were too ignorant, or too wicked, to teach them at home, were left to run wild on Sundays, and often to grow up more wicked than themselves. It is true that two or three kind ladies and clergymen used to assemble children together at their houses to teach them on Sundays in some few towns, but very little was known about their good work, not even in London. And now we are to hear about a great and good man, who was going to try to save a number of wicked children from ignorance and sin. When Mrs. Lane said "people don't keep schools on Sundays," the kind gentleman replied,

"If these decent women you speak of will help me, Mrs. Lane, we'll try for once to do differently to other 'people.' Where do they live?"

Mrs. Lane gave him the names and addresses, and away went the gentleman to call on the persons she had named.

The first of these women upon whom he called very readily agreed, for a small sum, paid weekly, to teach any children on a Sunday whom he should send to her, and the three others were equally willing. I am glad to be able to tell my readers the names of these—the first four Sunday School teachers. The Bible says, "Despise not the day of small things." And from that small beginning

of four Sunday School teachers, we have now hundreds of thousands.

But if the names of these teachers are known and praised, how much more should we honour him, whose pity for the poor neglected children in Gloucester induced him to commence and carry out such a great work as the establishment of Sunday Schools. Every child in England ought to know the name of

ROBERT RAIKES,

their Founder.

But how did he manage to gather the children together? He had a true friend to help him in the curate of St. John's, of whom Mrs. Lane had spoken so highly.

Mr. Raikes was proceeding to this clergyman's house a day or two after engaging the four teachers, when he met the Rev. Thomas Stock coming out. The two gentlemen walked on together, and Mr. Raikes was not long in introducing the subject.

"I wish something could be done for those unfortunate children in your parish, Mr. Stock; their behaviour and language on the Sabbath is, I am told, horribly profane and disgusting. Have you ever noticed it?"

ROBERT RAIKES.

"Indeed, I have," replied the clergyman; "it must be attributed to ignorance and wickedness on the part of the parents. Most of them work at the pin factory, and to live near it they congregate together, and one pollutes the other. What can be done to prevent this?"

Then Mr. Raikes explained his plan, which was eagerly approved of by his companion; and when he said, "I was coming to your house to ask you to assist me in collecting the children for next Sunday," Mr. Stock exclaimed,

"I will go with you at once, Mr. Raikes," and then, with a silent prayer for success, the two gentlemen turned their steps towards a part of the city of Gloucester, inhabited by men and women, many of whom were thieves, house-breakers, highway robbers, and others who believed in neither God nor devil. No wonder the two Christian men longed to save the children from such contamination.

The first wretched home which presented itself, in its dirt and poverty, was enough to daunt them; and the mother came forward quickly to prevent their entering. Squalid, pale, and in rags, she stood before them, and asked, "What's your wull, gentlemen?"

"Have you any children?" asked Mr. Raikes.

"Ees, zure, I'ze a got six on 'em."

"Will you send them on Sunday to be taught to read?"

The woman paused—to have them taught to read would be fine—then she said,

"I'd loike to, but they couldna go in their ould rags."

"Yes, they can," said the clergyman, "only send them with clean hands and faces, and brushed hair, the clothes won't matter."

"Then, zure, and I'll send em, zir," said the woman, and "thank ye for't, too."

Many idlers gathered round to listen, and the news that the children were to go to be taught to read on Sundays spread like wild fire.

Before the two gentlemen left St. Catherine's Meadows, they had procured the names of about ninety children, who were to attend at the cottages of the four teachers for a few hours every Sunday to be taught to read.

The first Sunday meeting of these poor neglected children took place at the house of Mr. King, in July, 1780, in St. Catherine-street, Gloucester. Mrs. King was the first of the four chosen by Mr. Raikes as teachers of the Sunday School. She died three years afterwards, and her husband for many years supplied her place. In paying for this, Mr. Raikes was assisted by Mr. Stock, the curate of St. John's, who became

responsible for one-third of the salary to Mrs. King, while Mr. Raikes paid the remaining two-thirds.

His own school Mr. Raikes supported without help. Mrs. Sarah Critchley, who resided in the same parish as Mr. Raikes—St. Mary de Crypt—became the teacher of his school; a third was under the care of a Mrs. Brabant, and the fourth assembled at the house of the sexton of St. Aldgate, Mr. Trickey. These four were the first Sunday Schools in Gloucester; yet, during the last six months of the year 1780, other schools were established in various parts of the city.

How the little ragged scholars got on—and what they did on the first Sunday—shall be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST SUNDAY SCHOOL MORNING.

BRIGHT and warm shone the sun on that wonderful Sunday morning in July, 1780, which will be known by thousands of boys and girls, now and in ages to come, as the birthday of Sunday Schools.

Mr. Raikes arrived early at the house of Mr. King (in St. Catherine Street), whose wife was the first Sunday School teacher, but already a number of little ragamuffins were there, whose appearance in dirty rags would have disgusted many persons. Mr. Raikes, how-

ever, did not think of that, he only wanted to get them to come, that they might be taught to read about God and Jesus Christ, and to learn how wrong and sinful it was to swear and tell lies, and steal. Neither did Mrs. King object to teach these boys and girls because they were in rags; she had them in to her cottage on that first Sunday morning, and perhaps she talked to them about good things instead of teaching them the alphabet, till the bells began to chime for church.

Then the gentleman came back to the cottage and made the children walk two and two to church; most of them had never entered a place of worship in their lives, and Mr. Raikes talked to them so kindly about walking quietly, and behaving well as they were going to God's house, that they did exactly as he wished.

But, before they started, a lady who was living with her uncle, a pin manufacturer in Gloucester, was seen coming towards them with a number of children.

"May we join you, Mr. Raikes?" said the young lady; "these are some of the poor factory children that I have at my uncle's house every Sunday to teach them to read the Bible, and save them from the consequences of being ignorant."

Oh how pleased Mr. Raikes was! "Miss Cooke," he said, "I am thankful to find I have such a

helper in my work; I shall be only too glad to add to my number of little church-goers. I intend taking them myself as it is the first time."

"And I hope you will allow me to accompany you," she replied; "they are a ragged little regiment, but I shall be proud to walk with you at their head."

And so through the streets of Gloucester this lady and gentleman marshalled their ragged troop of the first Sunday scholars to God's house.

"I say, Moll Turner, what was ye all a doing ov last Sunday, when I zeed 'ee a walking like sojers, and a foine dirty ragged lot ye all was."

"Not more ragged than you, Tom Ford," said Molly, "and zure, now, we'd a got clean faces and hands then, and thee'st got a face black enough, I can tell 'ee."

"Ah, well, ne'er mind that now; what was 'ee doing ov? tell us that."

"Well, ain't ye yeard of the new schule uz is a going to?"

"Not I; 'ot dost thee mean?"

"Oh, we was up at Mrs. King's, and the kind man was there, and uz went into her clean parlour, and didn't her talk bootiful to uz; and then the man, Maister Raikes, he made uz all walk two and two, the girls fust and the boys arter, and we went to church."

"Wot, wi they ragged clothes? Didn't that ere man wi the red coat turn ye out?"

"Noo, uz went in and sat down in such a bootiful place, and Maister Raikes, he was there, and tould uz what to do. Oh, and then there was music and singing, and all the people stood up, and Maister Raikes told uz to stand up too; and then a man in a box, with a white gown on, read summut, and uz had to kneel down, and then there was that grand music, and a man got into another box, and talked about God."

"About God, Moll; who's He?"

"Oh, a great man, very strong. Mrs. King told us all about Him. He made the world, and uz, and everything."

"Not the houses," said Tom Ford; "men built them, I knows, for I've a zeed 'em doing of it."

"Oh, well, I can't tell about that, but thee'd best coom yersel next Sunday, and ye'll hear all aboot it."

"That's if mother 'll let me," said Tom, "and p'raps they people won't ha' me."

"Why?"

"Oh, 'coz of my faythe, he'th a been in Gloucester gaol more nor once."

"Oh, that's no matter, Tom, I be quite sure, I be; there's Jack Foster, he comes to Sunday-

schule, and his faythers was hanged, but Maister Raikes never took no count of that."

"Didn't he! oh, wull, then, Molly, I'll ax mother, and she'll let me come I'll warrant, if thee thinks I may bring Jemmy wi' me; he be only six, and I'm eight."

"Why, ees, Tom, I bees zure ye may; there's ever so many as little as him; but I maun go now, the mother 'll be wanting me; good bye. Mind now, ye must be at the schule by eight o'clock on Sunday," she called out as she ran off.

"Eight o'clock," said Tom to himself, "lor, mother won't be up, nor faythers. I'm main glad o' that, though, for mebbe he'd stop me fro' going. Ne'er mind, I knows what I'll do."

On Sunday morning Tom woke early, for the sun shone into the dirty, wretched closet through a little broken window.

"I wonder what o'clock it be," he said to himself as he sat up in bed, "it hathn't gone seven yet, I think, and they be all fast asleep, I reckon, and ain't faythers a snoring! that's the drink at the alehouse. Mother's right there; if faythers wouldn't spend his wages at the alehouse, uz ud have a better bed to lie on than this ere, and more to eat."

Poor Tom, the straw on which he lay could scarcely be called a bed. It was covered with an

old sheet, which had once been white, but was now colourless, unless we can call the greyish-brown of dirt a colour.

The boys were sleeping on this in their rags, for covering there was none ; therefore, in week-days, when St. John's clock struck the half-hour past seven, Tom had nothing to do but jump up from the straw just as he was, and leave his wretched home.

But on this morning he suddenly paused, and looked sadly at his ragged clothes and bare feet. "I can go to factory like this," said the boy to himself, "but not to schule where there's the gentry"—and then came the recollection of Molly's words, "You're not to mind yer rags, on'y wash yer face an' hands and brush yer hair." "I'm afeard I can't do that, lor there ain't nought to do't wi ; but I'll wake up Jimmy, and praps mother hath a got a bit of soap, and a summut to wipe our faces wi'."

"Come along, Jimmy," he added, as the little boy got up quickly, and then, half asleep, exclaimed, in a whining tone,

"Isn't it Sunday, Tom ; uz ain't a going to factory, be uz ? "

"No, no Jim ; hush, uz be going to schule and to church. Come on, and don't make a noise," he added in a whisper, as he pushed open gently the

unfastened door of the living room, where his parents slept also on straw, without a bedstead.

A door from this miserable room opened to the lane in which it stood, and through this the boys crept without waking their parents, and passed round it to a small back court, where they found a tin bowl, a piece of yellow soap, and a coarse cloth. Tom ran into the lane and filled the tin bowl with water from a pump which supplied the inhabitants; and, returning to the back court, the elder boy, after a fashion, washed first the face and hands of Jimmy, and then his own. No wonder the little faces shone after the yellow soap and the rubbing of the coarse cloth.

But they were bright and even pretty faces when the mask of dirt had been removed, although Tom tried his best, but in vain, to smooth down his little brother's curly locks and his own matted hair without comb or brush. Round the faces of the boys could be seen the water-mark which divided the clean skin from the dirty throats, the latter being scarcely a shade lighter than the ragged coat collar that surrounded them.

Could our readers have seen these little boys, with their long ragged coats, reaching nearly to their heels, their equally ragged kerseymere breeches, just covering the knees, and neither shoes nor stockings, they would have no doubt been as

THE MORNING'S TOILET.

glad as good Mr. Raikes, that they were going somewhere to be taught about God and Jesus Christ, and to read the Bible, and learn Dr. Watts' Hymns.

Molly Turner was looking out for them, and she was a proud and happy little girl when she led them into Mr. King's cottage, and better still when Mr. Raikes patted her on the head, and told her how pleased he was. Little girls and boys in these days, when they leave home, neatly dressed, to attend the Sunday-schools at half-past nine, or even ten o'clock, sometimes find it hard to get up early enough to be at school in time. Will those Sunday scholars who read this story try to remember the two little ragged boys who, a hundred years ago, got up at half-past seven o'clock in the morning, washed themselves as well as they could, and went off without any breakfast to be at school by eight o'clock.

They did not make excuses and say, "I couldn't come because mother was not up to dress us and get our breakfast." No; they managed as well as they could by themselves, and, as we shall see by-and-by, God blessed them in a way Tom Ford little expected, and Molly Turner also, for it was through her that Tom first went to the Sunday-school, and brought his little brother.

Mrs. Ford did not rise till nine o'clock on that

never-to-be-forgotten Sunday morning, and, after getting the scanty breakfast ready, she looked into the closet to call the boys.

"Out a'ready," said the mother, "rioting and quarrelling in the meadows, no doubt, with them bad boys, they Vinces. Oh dear, they'll take arter their faythers when they grows up; there's swearing and bad words enough a'ready, an' what'll it be bym-by. I'll get un some dinner for once in a way," she continued, with a sigh, "for its little enow they get o' week-days, God knows."

But Mrs. Ford, although she said this, little thought how much God knew, or what He was doing for her now; indeed, she seldom thought of God at all, and to suppose that He would listen if she asked Him to help her in her troubles, never entered her head. Yet, even on that very day, she was to hear more about Him than she had ever heard in her life.

John Ford roused himself from his drunken sleep a little before noon, and after refreshing himself with a wash at the pump, took up his pipe, and walked out into the bright, fresh, summer air, saying, as he did so, "I'll be back to dinner, Missus."

Left alone, Mrs. Ford endeavoured to tidy up the living-room a bit, and as she had contrived to secure enough from John's wages to provide meat,

potatoes, and bread, for their Sunday's dinner, a very tempting smell met the boys as, at a quarter to one, they came rushing in full of their adventures.

"Oh, mother, there's summut good for dinner, and uz be hungered sure enow; uz hadn't no breakfast."

"Where ha' ye been? With they bad Vinces I reckon;" and then, as they came nearer, she exclaimed, "What ha' ye been a' doing to yer faces?"

"On'y washing 'em, mother; and we ain't been with the bad boys, we've a been to Sunday-schule."

"Sunday-schule! what, wi' all they dirty rags on? I wonder they took ye in."

"Oh, mother, there was lots worse than uz, and ain't it prime, and uz has been to church and——."

"Here be your fayther, boys; I be going to take up the dinner, and uz'll hear ye say yer say arterwards."

John Ford had walked off a little of the effects of his Saturday night carousals, and he said not a word to his boys till they had all enjoyed the good dinner. The more wholesome, because there was nothing to drink with it but water. He had too large a score at the alehouse to ask more credit except for himself, and his wife said nothing of the money she had kept to provide food for the next week.

John's wages would have enabled him and his family to live clean and respectable, and with wholesome food; but more than half went to the alehouse. And to pay up his debt incurred there, and in low gambling, he had more than once committed petty theft, which, as Tom Ford told Molly, had caused him to be sent to gaol.

Sarah Ford had not sunk quite so low as some of the factory men's wives, who had been made reckless by the dissipated conduct of their husbands. Mr. Raikes and the Rev. Mr. Stock had called upon her one of the first, and asked her to send her boys, and she almost promised to do so. But the woman, who had once been a respectable servant in a gentleman's house, shrunk from sending her children in rags to a decent place like Mr. King's. To hear, therefore, that her children had really been, not only there, but to church, startled her. She was more greatly surprised still when her husband said,

"Boys, what was you a telling your mother about church just now; that there beadle wouldn't let in such ragamuffins as you."

"But he did, fayther," replied Tom. "Uz didna go by oursels. There war a gentleman and a lady, and they walked wi' uz, and uz had to march like sojers, two and two; such a lot, more nor thirty I reckon."

"And what was ye a doing there?"

"Oh, we'd a been to Sunday-schule, up to Mr. King's; and there war Mistress King, and she taught us A B C; and by'm by, uz is to learn the Bible, and about God and heaven. Arter that uz went to church, and there war Maister Raikes and Mistress Cooke, and they tould us to stan' oop and kneel down; and then waren't the singing grand!"

"Yes, fayther, I did like that," said little Jimmy. "My, it war bootiful!"

"And how did ye get them clean faces and hands?"

"Oh," cried Jimmy, "Tom washed me, and hisself, too; but we couldna get no brush. Maister Raikes tould us to coom agin, and not to mind our rags if our faces and hands were clean; and when I tould 'un uz hadn't got any brush, he says if yer good boys and try to larn, and behave well at church, I'll gi' ye a brush and comb."

"And so you want to go to Sunday-schule agin, Jim, next Sunday?"

"Ees, fayther, I loikes it, and church, and the big music, and the singing; mayn't us go?" said Jimmy.

"Oh, yer can go if yer like, and if yer mother 'll mend your old rags; but who tould you about this schule?"

Then Tom related to his father what Molly had said when he met her; and at last John Ford rose, and, after saying to his wife, "If the gentry want 'em to learn, and to go to church, and what not, let 'em go; it can't do much good and it won't do 'em any harm," went out, as poor Sarah knew, to increase his score at the alehouse.

THE HOUSE IN WHICH THE FIRST SUNDAY SCHOOL WAS HELD.

CHAPTER III.

TOM FORD LEARNS A HYMN.

SOME three months have passed since Tom and Jimmy Ford joined the other children at the Sunday-school, at Mrs. King's. There are now several schools in Gloucester besides those already mentioned. But we need not yet refer to any excepting the school established by Mr. Raikes, in his own parish of St. Mary de Crypt, and the one at which Tom and Jimmy Ford and Molly Turner now attended. By the end of three months so many children came to these schools that rules were made for them by the clergyman, Mr. Stock.

School opened at eight o'clock, and even at this early hour Mr. Raikes would very often be there; and, oh, how glad the children were to see him, he always spoke so kindly. Yet he would reprove the untidy ones, and praise those who were clean and neat, even if their clothes were old.

Each teacher had the care of twenty children, and these he divided into four classes, and made the best boy or girl in the class monitor. As soon as the children were able to read the New Testament, they were taught the meaning of the chapters they had read. They also learned portions of the Church Catechism and Watts' Hymns.

Tom Ford, who was a very quick boy, learned soon to read the New Testament, while little Jimmy could repeat a great many hymns from hearing the others say them. Poor Tom Ford had often heard his father and others swear, as well as his young companions, and he at first got into trouble from using bad language. Indeed, so did all the boys, for the monitors were obliged to report every time bad words were spoken in school. Mr. Raikes was also very anxious to prevent quarrelling amongst the children. He taught them to be kind one to another, and not to be provoking or spiteful; but sometimes quarrels would arise, because these neglected children had never been

taught to control themselves, but thought it right to return blow for blow.

When this happened Mr. Raikes would have the two culprits brought before him, and after finding out which was most to blame, he would make the wrong-doer ask pardon, and the other was obliged to forgive.

Mr. Raikes, however, soon discovered that boys and girls in those days, and with such bad parents as the low class people at Gloucester then were, could only be induced to act rightly and behave well by the promise of rewards. The best and most diligent, therefore, received useful presents at certain times—such as books, combs, shoes, or other articles of clothing. They needed these things, which were very useful, as well as being rewards for diligence and good conduct. Sunday scholars in our days are often rewarded for attention to what they are taught; but they have learned, it is hoped, that we ought to do well and act rightly, not for a reward, but because it is pleasing to God. The poor neglected children in these schools founded by Mr. Raikes, learned to know this after awhile; and among those who thus learnt was Tom Ford, as we shall hear by-and-by.

Mr. Raikes was never tired of doing something for his Sunday scholars. He would go to the houses of the poor in the lowest parts of the city,

and many new scholars were gained in this way.

At last the children learned to love him, and tried to deserve his praise and dread his displeasure. One woman, whose boy was a Sunday scholar, told him that he said to her every night, "Mother, do you think I have done anything to day to make Mr. Raikes find fault with me next Sunday?"

And so the Sunday-schools prospered and increased in numbers, till at last all the children were taken to church twice on the Sunday; and in the afternoon, once a month, they were examined by the clergyman in the catechism, and had the answers explained to them.

The first time this occurred Tom Ford was in a state of great excitement. He had received as a reward some neat clothes, and made his appearance at church in decent apparel, with new grey stockings and shoes.

Little Jimmy's rags had also disappeared, and the small legs and feet were also comfortably covered. More wonderful still, his mother was coming to church to hear the catechizing; and proud, indeed, was the poor crushed and disheartened woman at hearing how well Tom answered the clergyman's questions, and how kindly Mr. Raikes praised him afterwards. But three months after this, somebody else was at church

to hear the children examined by the Rev. Mr. Stock, who had been such a helper to Mr. Raikes. Tom Ford's father was there! and you shall hear how this happened.

For the first few weeks after Molly Turner had persuaded Tom to attend the school, John Ford had been very unkind and disagreeable about their going. If Tom began to tell his mother about what they had been learning on the Sunday, or at church, he would sit and look quite sulky and cross, and at last he would get up in a pet, and say, as he went out to the alehouse, "I'll stop them Sunday-schule doings if ye comes home here to tell your canting lies."

After this Mrs. Ford and the boys would remain silent on Sundays till their father went out. One afternoon, early in the spring, Tom was sitting near the window, to catch the light of the setting sun, while he tried to learn his hymn for the next Sunday. Tom could always do this more quickly if he read it aloud, and as his father hated to hear anything about these Sunday-schools, he was anxious to get it perfect before he came home.

"What be'ee larning now, Tom?" said his mother, as he pored over his book.

"Oh, it be one of they hymns you likes so, mother; may I say it out loud! I can larn un better."

"Ees zure, lad; I likes to hear ye."

"I've a got only two verses to larn, mother; I've larnt all the others. But I'll have to say all on it to-morrow; so I'll jist begin from the fust verse."

The next minute the words of Dr. Watts' beauti ful hymn sounded through the room:

"Almighty God, Thy piercing eye
Strikes through the shades of night;
And our most secret actions lie
All open to Thy sight.

There's not a sin that we commit,
Nor wicked word we say,
But in Thy dreadful book 'tis writ,
Against the judgment day."

Tom paused. "Oh, mother," he said, "on'y jist now think o' that! Maister Raikes made a lot on us larn that 'ere verse one day when we'd a been saying bad words. On'y to think that the great God, who made heaven and earth, can see in the dark, and can hear them bad, dirty words as we says sometimes."

"Ees, child, and He've a yeard me manys a time, I reckon; but go on, let's hear all on it."

On went Tom, sometimes glancing at his book,

"And must the crimes that I have done
Be read and published there?
Be all exposed before the sun,
While men and angels hear?

"Lord, at Thy feet ashamed I lie,
Upward I dare not look;
Pardon my sins before I die,
And blot them from Thy book."

"I'll read the next two verses, mother," said Tom; "I don't know them yet, and I've a got to say 'em to-morrow." Then he went on—

"Remember all the dying pains,
That my Redeemer felt,
And let His blood wash out my stains,
And answer for my guilt.

"Oh, may I now for ever fear,
To indulge a sinful thought;
Since the great God can see and hear,
And writes down every fault."

"Oh, mother, only think, if God keeps 'count of our bad doings, won't He punish us bym'by. But I must make haste and larn these here two verses; faythe'r 'll be home presently."

There had been another listener to this beautiful hymn, unknown to Tom and his mother. John Ford, when he had money, seldom came home after leaving work, and when he did, it was to terrify his poor wife out of the little store she had saved for food. His score generally ran so high as the end of the week approached, that more credit was denied him until that score was paid from his weekly wages, leaving, as usual, so little for his half-starved family.

The day of which we write being Friday, he had been refused any supply at the alehouse unless he could pay for it.

"Sally's got summut at home, I reckon," he said to himself; "I'll jist go and bully her out on't."

The lane at the back of John Ford's cottage was the nearest way to and from the alehouse. With hasty steps he walked towards home, working himself up to that appearance of anger which always frightened his poor wife into subjection, yet conscience had already been aroused by chance words from the books his boys learnt in at school, which he had heard unknown to them. But the cravings for drink drove back the warnings of conscience, and he reached the back door of his cottage in furious haste.

Here he suddenly stopped short, unable to move. From the inner room sounded, in the clear voice of his boy, words that filled him with awe:

> "Almighty God, Thy piercing eye
> Strikes through the shades of night,
> And our most secret actions lie
> All open to Thy sight."

Spell-bound, he stood unseen, and listened as verse after verse sounded in his ears. John Ford in his young days, before drink had perverted his heart and soddened his brain, had possessed a good voice

and correct ear. His love of singing had made him popular at the alehouse ; and now, in his half sober state, the measure and rhyme of the old doctor's hymn pleased him, and added to the impression made by the subject. As in a dream came back the memory of his early life, when he had walked with his parents to the house of God, and knelt at his mother's knee to offer up his evening prayers. John Ford, even in those days of ignorance, could read and write. And now, what was he? He answered the question himself —a vile and profligate reprobate ; and then came the prayer of the publican, so often the first in the convicted heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Then he walked quietly through the little scullery and entered the parlour, less squalid and dirty than when last described, startling his wife and children. Too well they knew what to expect from his appearance on that day and at such an hour.

To his wife's surprise he quietly seated himself in a chair, and said,

"I'd like a dish o' tea, Sally, if you've a got any."

"No I haven't, but Tom 'll fetch it directly, minit," she replied, taking out her store and giving Tom some pence to buy a small quantity of tea, which was still very dear, and what else was necessary ; yet she trembled as she waited for the

boy's return, in dread that this change in her husband wouldn't last, even while busy placing on the table cups and basins and other broken articles necessary for the expected meal. Little Jimmy had taken up the hymn-book, and, seated in Tom's chair, was trying to make out the words of his lesson which his brother was teaching him, glancing, however, now and then, at his father in surprise and fear.

"Bring me that book, Jim," were the words of his father, which made the child spring up and obey.

"What book is it, Jimmy?" The kind tones encouraged the boy; he replied,

"Dr. Watts' Hymns, fayther."

"Can you read it?"

"No, fayther, only a little; Tom teaches me," and pointing to the open page he added, "that's the hymn I've got to say on Sunday."

John Ford glanced at the words, and read—

"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see
A whole assembly worship Thee;
At once they sing, at once they pray,
They hear of heaven, and learn the way."

He shut the book, and saying, "Go and learn your lesson, Jimmy," gave it back to the child, and went out.

"He'th gone to the alehouse arter all," said

poor Sarah, as Tom, in eager haste, returned with the required articles and placed them on the table.

"Oh no, mother," said the boy, "you'll see fayther 'll come back, and when you've got it all ready, if he hathna' come, I'll go find him."

Tom was right, his father's conscience had now been thoroughly roused, and, while he walked in the lane at the back, this faithful monitor did not spare him.

"You can't excuse yourself, John Ford," said Conscience, "you were taught better things in your young days; you've spent in gambling at the alehouse the money that you ought to have given to your wife and children, to feed and clothe them; and if you couldn't afford to send your boys to school, why didn't you teach them in the evening yourself instead of going to the alehouse? It was a miserable place to come home to, was it? Whose fault was that? You frightened your poor wife, and you gave her so little money, how was she to get food, and clothes, and soap, and all those brushes and pails which people want to enable them to keep themselves and their houses clean? No wonder she was disheartened, and felt it was no use to try any more."

"But I was obliged to let my boy go to the pin factory, and there he mixed with bad, swearing boys, and was getting as bad as they; how could

I help that?" said John. "Not help it! Is it so now they're taught better things at Sunday School? Haven't you even tried to stop the lessons and the reading from going on? and yet you knew things were better, the house and their clothes more tidy, and all this while you were keeping back nearly all your wages to pay your weekly score at the alehouse, and coming home drunk, to make matters worse."

"I know, I know, it's all true," said the convicted man, "but I will change from this time, God helping me. I'll give up the alehouse and go to church, and we'll soon have things cleaner and better in the house. I've been miserable ever since the boys went to school, because their hymns and what they read, and the good things taught them at Sunday-school, which they repeated, was just as if they were blaming me, and I couldn't bear to listen to it, especially when I wasn't sober; but I'll try now, and——" a voice behind him made John Ford turn round, as Tom said, timidly, "faythe r, ain't you coming to tea, it's all ready."

"Yes, my boy, I'm coming," and in a few moments he entered the room with his hand on Tom's shoulder. What a happy yet silent tea time that was! Not for years had this rickety little table supported such a supply of milk and sugar, and bread and dripping, to say nothing of the

battered tea-pot, the cracked cups and basins, that served for holding the tea, and the milk and sugar; one broken-handled knife, and one bent tea-spoon supplying the whole party. The boys, half afraid still of their father, even while enjoying the, to them, pleasant and plentiful meal, did not speak; and John Ford, although he spoke kindly to his wife, could not attempt to explain the change in himself till they were alone.

Although John Ford was unable all at once to break off the evil habits he had acquired, yet from that day his house began to improve in cleanliness and comfort, because his wife had become more hopeful. As a commencement, he brought her home nearly half his wages on Saturday, and on Sunday stayed at home instead of visiting the ale-house, and listened to what his boys had to tell of the Sunday-school teachings.

Poor Sarah scarcely knew how to contain herself with joy. Had she known the fierce struggle going on in his heart, between a sense of duty and a longing for drink, she would have wondered more than ever. Sarah's early home had not been like his. He was far beyond her in a knowledge of the Bible; indeed, till her children became Sunday scholars, she knew nothing.

But Sarah was gentle and teachable, and her eager desire to listen to all her children could tell

on these subjects ended at last, as we know, in her attendance at God's house to learn more. And now she would have John to teach her ; for, on the next Sunday evening, after having staid at home from the alehouse, he went with his wife to church.

Dear Sunday scholars, if two poor little ragged boys could do so much good a hundred years ago, by repeating at home what they have learned at Sunday-school, what ought our Sunday scholars to do now, when they are taught so much more.

CHAPTER IV.

SERVICE AT THE CATHEDRAL.

MR. RAIKES soon found out that Tom Ford had inherited a fine voice and a good ear for music; and it pleased him very much to hear his scholars sing out well at church. One day he asked several of them if they would like to rise early enough to go to the cathedral service, at seven o'clock, for morning prayers.

Our readers have read about this cathedral in the first chapter of this story, and of the part called the *Ladye Chapel*, in which the morning service was held. The columns and arches and all the architecture of this chapel, in-

cluding the painted windows, are considered very beautiful. No wonder the poor boys, who had once been ragged and dirty, should be ready to rise early and make themselves as neat as they could that they might go and worship God in such a beautiful place, and join their voices with the singers and the grand organ.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL.

A large number assembled at the house of one of the mistresses, and from thence walked to the cathedral, like a regiment of soldiers, two and two, the mistress following them. Sometimes there would be fifty boys present, and Mr. Raikes, who then lived in the Cathedral Close, was always there to meet them and to see if they behaved properly.

Tom Ford's delight knew no bounds, and on his return from the cathedral on the first day he rushed into the cottage, exclaiming, "Oh, mother, it was so grand; it is such a beautiful place, and the organ did play so loud sometimes, and then so soft, and we could all sing the Psalms with it, and Mr. Raikes was there and told us what to do; and oh, I should like to be there always. Oh, yes, and *arter*—no, *after*—Maister Raikes tells us when we says the words wrong; well, and then as we all passed by Maister Raikes down the aisle, and made our bows to him, he gived us a piece o' gingerbread—every one; and here it is mother; I've a brought it home to give Jimmy half, because he's too young to go."

"But I'll go, too, soon," says Jimmy, who loved music quite as much as Tom did, though his voice was not so strong. He soon forgot about the music, however, when Tom gave him half of the gingerbread.

Weeks passed on, and the change in John Ford showed itself, not only in his conduct, but in the improved appearance of his house, his children, and himself. One day Mr. Raikes, whose quick eye noticed everything, was attracted by the neat and respectable dress of the two young Fords, who were clothed in new but homely apparel.

"Your mother keeps you very neat and decent now, Tom; how does she manage?" he asked.

Blushing deeply the boy replied, "Please, sir, may I tell you after school, when the others ain't here."

"Of course you may, my boy; you shall tell me when you like."

The time arrived for leaving school, and Tom remained behind with his brother. As soon as the room was empty, Tom, now a tall, stout boy of eleven, approached Mr. Raikes, and said,

"Please, sir, I can tell you now why we've got such good clothes. When we came to Sunday-school first we'd got only dirty rags to wear; faythe used to spend nearly all his money at the alehouse, and Jimmy and me was larning bad words; and often we hadn't anything to eat, and mother used to cry. And when we left work a the factory we'd stay out and play with wicked boys, 'cos 'twas so miserable at home."

"And is it different now, my boy?" said the gentleman.

"Oh yes, sir; faythe's left off going to the alehouse, and he gives mother all his wages, and the house is so clean, and we've a got new chairs and things, and mother doesn't cry now."

"What is your father, my boy?"

"He's a journeyman currier, sir; and he earns more wages now, because, when he went to alehouse he used to be tipsy sometimes, and couldn't go to work. Now he goes to church with mother on Sundays."

"I'm very glad, indeed, to hear such good news, Tom," said Mr. Raikes; "there's a penny for each of you to put in your pockets; as they are new and have no holes in them you are not in danger of losing your money. But don't spend them to-day."

"Oh no, sir," replied Tom; "I knows it's Sunday, and I don't mean to spend mine at all."

"No more don't I, sir," said Jimmy.

"That's right; and now boys run home, and don't forget what you have learnt to-day at school."

With a bow, and "Thank ye, sir, for the penny," the boys left the presence of their kind friend, who presently wended his way home, while his heart glowed with thankfulness for the good news he had heard.

A few days after this Mr. Raikes met John Ford in the street, and said,

"My friend, I think your name is Ford, is it not?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man.

"And you have two boys who attend my Sunday School?"

"Quite right, sir; and I'm thankful they ever went there."

"I wish to talk to you about yourself, Mr. Ford, not of your boys," said Mr. Raikes. "It has given me great pleasure to hear that you have left off going to the alehouse on Sundays; and your son tells me that you now stay at home and never get tipsy."

"It's all your doing, sir."

"My doing," replied Mr. Raikes, in surprise; "I don't believe I ever spoke to you in my life before."

"No, sir, you have not; but what you have told my boys at the school on a Sunday they have told me again and again at home."

And then John Ford gave Mr. Raikes a short account of his past life, and how, after a struggle with his evil inclinations, and prayer to God for help, he had become a changed character, and hoped to continue in the path of duty, with God's help, to the end of his life.

Mr. Raikes shook hands with the man who had gained such a victory over himself, an honour John was proud of talking about; while the gentleman continued his walk, more than ever convinced that the blessing of God would rest on the enterprise,

which some had even laughed at, and others had disapproved of.

Molly Turner, the little girl who first told Tom of the Sunday School, still attended regularly herself, and was very quick and intelligent. More than once she had gained a reward from Mr. Raikes for attention to her lessons and for correct answers to questions in church.

Her mother, a respectable but uneducated widow, had no other children, and she had rather spoilt Molly, who had been allowed to run wild and mix with the ragged and quarrelsome boys and girls who played around the factory while her mother was out at work.

Gladly did Mrs. Turner consent to send her little girl, who did not even know her letters at ten years old, to the Sunday-school, when asked to do so by Mr. Raikes and Mr. Stock. Molly became a great favourite at school, for she learnt quickly, and was, as a rule, well behaved. She did not, however, behave well at home, and more than once her mother had threatened to tell Mr. Raikes of her conduct; but Molly did not believe she would.

"Ye wunt tell Maister Raikes o' me, mother," said the spoilt child, one day; "you've a said so often, but you've never tould him yet, so you tell stories, and that's worse nor me."

"I wull this time, then," said the mother, "if yer doan't say you'm sorry for throwing the jug at yer mother, ye wicked child."

"I ain't going to say I'm sorry, then," exclaimed the naughty girl, as she took up her hat and ran off.

Left alone, Mrs. Turner began to reflect, as she stood at her washing tub.

"Molly 'll grow up and turn me out o' house and hoame," she said to herself, "if I doan't do summut. Lor, perhaps when I says I wull tell Mr. Raikes and I doan't do ut, it is a story, or what the parson ca's a lie. I'll go to once," she exclaimed, suddenly, wiping the soap suds from her arms. "The saucy young slut shan't tell me I tells lies again." So saying, she turned down her gown sleeves, put on her cloak and hood—for country women did not wear bonnets in those days—and started off for Mr. Raikes's house in Palace Yard, near the cathedral.

Mrs. Turner wended her way quickly, not so much in anger against the little daughter she loved so dearly, as from the fear that, without the help of Mr. Raikes, Molly would grow up a wicked, undutiful girl.

She found the gentleman she sought leaving the house, and exclaimed, as he paused to see what she wanted.

"Oh, sir, may I speak to you?"

"Certainly," he replied; and turning back and asking her to follow, he entered the house, and, leading her to a little parlour, requested her to sit down.

"What can I do for you, my good woman," he asked.

"Oh, sir, I'm Molly Turner's mother, and I'm afraid she'll grow up a bad girl."

"What has she been doing?" asked Mr. Raikes.

In answer to this question, the mother described her child's naughty and sulky temper, and all that had occurred that morning.

"Has she behaved in this way often, Mrs. Turner?"

"Oh ees, sir; from quite a babby, and even since she's been a coming to schule here; I'm afeard I've a spoiled her."

"I fear so, too," he replied; "why did you not come to me before?"

"I meant to, sir, and I told her so; but I didn't do ut; and she told me this morning I tell lies," added the poor woman, in a tone of regret, which Mr. Raikes was glad to hear.

"Yes, you were mistaken; you should never threaten a child without keeping your word. Where is Molly now?"

"Up to factory, sir; she'll be hoame to her dinner."

"Oh, well, when she comes home ask her if she's sorry for being so naughty this morning, and whether she means to ask you to forgive her; and, if she is still sulky, bring me word to-morrow, and I will come to your cottage in the evening, after school, and see what I can do."

"Ah," thought the mother, as she curtsied to the gentleman and promised to do as he said, "Maister Raikes dinna know what a limb her be at hoame; I'm afeard she'll be too much for him to-morrow. I can't ax her to say her's sorry agin; lor, her 'd larf in my face; no, I'll wait till the morn."

Molly came home and conducted herself as if nothing had happened. But something in her mother's manner puzzled her, and made her say to herself, "I declare, mother's in the sulks; I must just coax her out o' that, or she'll be after telling Maister Raikes." Molly coaxed and petted her mother, and behaved so well that evening, that the loving, yet foolish mother, felt quite unhappy, and wished she had not gone to tell Mr. Raikes.

"I must go and tell him to-morrow that she's not sorry, I s'pose," she said to herself; but I don't want to, now Molly's so gude; I'm afeard it

'll only make her more sulky and bad than ever."

Mr. Raikes, however, had a very different opinion. He had so often tried to teach the children to be dutiful to their parents, and not to quarrel, or if they did, to ask pardon and make friends.

One Sunday afternoon two of his Sunday scholars quarrelled outside the school house door as they were going home, and at last began to fight. Mr. Raikes, who heard a noise, went out, and, after separating the boys, questioned them about the cause of the quarrel.

"Who was the first offender?" he asked.

"He war," cried several voices, pointing to a passionate, troublesome boy, who had only lately become a scholar."

"He tuk my book," said the offender; "and then coz I hit him, he hit me agin."

"I didn't know it was his'n," said Harry Todd, generally a quiet, well-behaved boy.

"And you struck him because he struck you; oh, Harry, I thought you would remember what the gentle Saviour says, and were too well taught to return a blow; and, you see, it has ended in a fight, and made you both in a wicked passion. Come back, George," cried the speaker, as he saw the boy who struck the first blow trying to sneak

away, "you must not go home yet. Come with me into the school-room, all of you; I will not keep you long."

The boys loved the kind gentleman too well to disobey, and, in the rush back to the house, George Weaver was carried in with the rest.

"All of you sit down quietly, excepting George Weaver and Harry Todd."

The boys obeyed in silence. Then, placing the two culprits before him, he said, "Harry, do you remember any verse you have read in the New Testament that forbids you to return evil for evil?"

"Yes, sir," he replied, looking ashamed.

"What is it, Harry? repeat it if you can."

"Yes, sir; I learnt it in my lesson—

"'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.'"

"Then you know you were wrong to return the blow."

"Yes, sir, and I am very sorry I did it."

"Tell George Weaver so, and ask him to forgive you."

The boy hesitated, and stood silent.

"Harry," said Mr. Raikes, after a pause, "what would Jesus Christ have done when he was a boy?"

Without a word the child turned to his sulky looking companion, and said, "I be main sorry I struck you, George ; please forgive me."

But all this was too strange to one who had been only rescued for a few weeks from the worst part of the town ; and George Weaver stood in sulky silence, mingled with a look of astonishment.

"George," said Mr. Raikes, who knew that this poor child of eleven had once been shut up in dreadful prison in the old castle for stealing, "suppose you had done something very bad, and were going to be shut up in prison, don't you think you would ask the magistrate to forgive you, if you thought he would ?"

A scared look had passed over the boy's face as the gentleman spoke, and, as if in fear, he replied, "Yes, sir."

"Well, then, those who do wicked acts offend a greater person than a magistrate or even a judge. They offend the great God who can send them when they die to a dreadful place, worse than any prison, called hell, and keep them there for ever. Now, this great God wants us all to go to heaven, and He tells us in the Bible that, if we ask Him to forgive us when we do wrong, He will forgive us for Jesus Christ's sake. Don't you think we ought to be very glad to be able to ask to be forgiven, and not to go to that dreadful place ?"

"Ees, zur," was the ready reply.

"Well, then, George, now listen: there is one thing we can do which will prevent God from forgiving us. Can any boy tell me what that is?"

"Yes, sir," from many voices; "If we don't forgive those who offend us, God won't forgive us when we do wrong."

"Now for a verse from the New Testament, Harry; I'm sure you have learnt one on this subject."

"Yes, sir; 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'"

"Who is our heavenly Father, Harry?"

"God, sir," he replied quietly.

The boy who had been startled into attention by a mention of the prison, had heard and understood, for George Weaver was not wanting in intelligence.

"I'll forgive Harry, sir," he said; "I knows I hit he first, and I be sorry now."

"Then shake hands, my boys," said the benevolent man, in a faltering tone, and deeply touched; "and now get away home as fast as you can, and don't forget this lesson."

Away scampered the boys, while Robert Raikes, as we like to call him, walked home, full of happy thoughts and thankfulness to God, as he recalled

THE RECONCILIATION.

what those children had been only twelve months before. And now, on the Sunday after Mrs. Turner's visit, he had again to test the good effects of his teaching in the girls' school.

Molly arrived early, as usual, and obtained from the mistress and monitors the praise she deserved for her correctly repeated lessons. She was looking forward with pride to a reward from Mr. Raikes, and expecting him anxiously when the door opened, and he entered, but not alone.

Behind him, to her surprise, and then alarm, walked her mother, neatly dressed in her best brocaded dress and muslin hood and cloak, with sleeves to the elbows, and long black lace mittens.

Carefully had the poor woman preserved the remnants of better days during the first six years of her widowhood, and now since Sunday-schools had brought to the cottages of the poor new light about the Sabbath, and cleaner habits, she had attired herself in them to go to church.

Fashions did not change so often in those days as now, especially among the inhabitants of country towns, so that Mrs. Turner looked very respectable; yet, if she could walk now into some of our Sunday-schools, she would look as if she had just stepped out of one of the picture frames in Hampton Court Palace.

But no such thoughts as these filled the mind of Molly Turner as Mr. Raikes and her mother entered the school-room.

"I wonder if mother's told Maister Raikes about me," she said to herself; but the next moment Molly lost all fear, as her mother said,

"I be going to the cathedral, Molly, so Maister Raikes says ye may go wi' me."

Full of glee, she hastily attired herself in the taffety hood and cloak her mother had made for her, and left the school-house before the rest of the children, as the cathedral was at a much greater distance than the church. How little she thought that her mother and Mr. Raikes had been talking about her that morning, or that he was coming to their cottage in the evening on purpose to talk to her. Molly had been rather contrary and troublesome to her mother on that Sunday. She was a child who could not bear indulgence, and her mother's kindness in taking her to the cathedral, instead of making her behave better to such a good mother, aroused unkind thoughts in her heart, and she said to herself,

"I bean't going to trouble about Maister Raikes; mother hasn't told him; she's afeard, for she lets me do as I like, and I don't care."

Sunday evening came. The fond mother had prepared a nice tea, with honey and jam, for her

dearly-loved child; but Molly, in her selfishness (all spoilt children are selfish), never thought how kind her mother was, but said to herself, as she enjoyed the good things, "Mother's sorry she said she'd tell Maister Raikes, and she wants to make me forget it."

She was soon to find out her mistake; for, just as they had finished tea, footsteps were heard outside, which surprised Molly, but made the foolish mother's heart beat with the dread of what was coming. A few moments and Mr. Raikes entered the room. Molly rose and curtsied to the gentleman in sudden fear. With all Mr. Raikes' kindness to his scholars, they felt obliged to treat him with respect.

Quick as lightning came the question in Molly's heart, "Have mother telled him about me?"

Mr. Raikes, however, said nothing at first but kind words to Mrs. Turner, and commendations for the neatness of her house and little garden. Molly, meanwhile, was watching her opportunity to get away; her surprise, therefore, was very great when Mr. Raikes said, "Molly, my child, I want to speak to you; come here."

Molly approached, and stood before him in silence. "What was he going to say?" her query was soon answered, for, taking her by the hand, he said, "Molly Turner, you are a good and

industrious girl at school, but I fear you are not kind to your mother."

The child's face flushed, and she exclaimed, impetuously, "You've been and told about me, mother."

"Yes, Molly; when a little girl is disobedient and rude to her kind mother, and throws a jug at her, something ought to be done to save that little girl from growing up to be wicked, and breaking her mother's heart. It's all passed now, Molly," continued Mr. Raikes, as he saw the sulky, hardened look on the child's face, "but you have never told your mother you are sorry, nor asked her to forgive you."

Mr. Raikes waited. There stood Molly, silent and sullen, while he had been speaking; the evil temper she possessed had overpowered conscience, and a firm determination not to say she was sorry, or ask forgiveness, formed itself in her heart.

For nearly half-an-hour Mr. Raikes patiently talked to the stubborn girl, while her mother, with tears, implored her to give way. Nothing could move her, not even her mother's tears. At last Mr. Raikes rose and said,

"Well, Molly, if you don't care for yourself, I care for you; I don't want you to grow up a bad and wicked girl, to be ruined and lost; so if you will not humble yourself, I must do it for you."

He then turned to Mrs. Turner, and, clasping his hands, exclaimed, "Please forgive your little daughter, Mrs. Turner; if she will not ask it for herself, I do for her; and I am sure the dear Saviour, who died to save us from being sent to hell, will ask God to forgive this unkind, stubborn little girl. Oh, what will become of her if God does not forgive her? and Jesus, who loves little children, how——"

"Oh, mother, mother, I am sorry. I want to be one of the children that Jesus loves; oh, do forgive me!" were the words which burst forth amid tears and sobs from the weeping girl, as she fell on her knees by her mother, the stubborn spirit conquered at last.

The mother raised the subdued child and pressed her to her heart, while Molly whispered, "I will be good to you, mother, I will."

Mr. Raikes came forward, and, placing his hand on the child's head, said,

"I think you will, Molly, now, but you must pray to God to help you, and I will pray for you, too." And then, with a kind word to Mrs. Turner, the founder of Sunday Schools took his departure, rejoicing in the hope that another little lamb was added to Christ's fold.

CHAPTER V.

AN INVITATION TO BREAKFAST.

ONE day, about two years after the schools had been established, Mr. Raikes invited several friends to breakfast with him at his own house. They readily accepted the invitation, but they knew nothing of the excitement this invitation would create among the Sunday scholars of the town.

Mr. Raikes had spoken of it on the previous Sunday while at the school, and Tom Ford and his brother rushed home in delight to tell their mother the wonderful news.

"Oh, mother," were their first words, "we're all going on Wednesday to Mr. Raikes to have breakfast, and then sit on benches in the garden opposite the parlour winder and sing; won't it be grand?"

"But where be the benches to come fro' ?"

"Oh, from our schule rooms, uz ha' got lots now, and a man's going to fetch 'em and put 'em in the garden."

The news soon spread, and the mothers of Mr. Raikes' scholars who liked to have their children neat and clean, were soon very busy washing frocks and hoods for the girls, and ruffles for the boys, as well as mending, brushing, and patching their coats and breeches.

I dare say also if any of them had buckles to wear at their knees, or on their shoes, they were cleaned and polished till they shone.

The looked-for morning came at last, and, long before eight o'clock, the children were hastening through the bright sunshine of a July morning to the teacher's house. Here they were met by Mr. Raikes, who marshalled them two and two to his own house, and led them into the garden.

The forms, or benches as they were called in those days, were raised one in front of another, near a wall which faced the large, old-fashioned window of a parlour.

This window stood open, and the children could see a long breakfast table laid out for a number of visitors. The lowest form stood in front for the little ones, and those behind which rose one above another were soon filled by the elder children,

numbering altogether about sixty. Then mugs of milk and water, and slices of bread, and butter were brought to them, and were eagerly enjoyed by the hungry children.

When all of them had finished, they were told to sit still and behave well till Mr. Raikes gave the signal for them to commence the hymn.

The birds were singing around them already, and the lark soared high in the sunlight. The garden, however, where the children sat, was protected from the sun's rays by the shadow of the house at that early hour.

Presently, the visitors began to arrive, and as their glances fell on the children, the founder of Sunday Schools proudly explained what he had done.

"These are the children of only one of our Sunday-schools," he said, as they seated themselves at the breakfast-table. "Two years ago, they were dirty, ragged, profane, and ignorant; you see what they are in appearance now. More than half of them can read and repeat hymns. The other Sunday-schools in Gloucester have been equally successful. And now, with your permission, I will show you something else that they can do."

Proud, indeed, was Tom Ford, on that never-to-be-forgotten day, when Mr. Raikes gave the

signal, before agreed upon, for him to be leader of the singing. The clear full tones of the young voice, as he commenced singing the words of Dr. Watts' hymn—

> "Happy the child whose youngest years
> Receive instruction well," &c.,

in which the rest quickly joined, made a clergyman present ask the boy's name.

"Tom Ford," replied Mr. Raikes; "I will tell you some little incidents about him by and by."

More hymns were sung by the children, and circumstances related respecting them by Mr. Raikes, and listened to so eagerly by his friends, that he fully realized the hope which had induced him to show the children to them; for their interest in Sunday-schools was secured from that day.

Perhaps the change which so many people noticed in the town of Gloucester on Sundays about this time caused the good effects of Sunday-schools to be spoken of in other parts of England. Colonel Townley, who resided near Sheffield, wrote to the Mayor of Gloucester, asking for particulars. Mr. Raikes, in reply, told him all about his scholars, how they had once been dirty, ragged, and wicked children, and the change which had been produced in them. But there was another gentleman who

noticed this improvement. He had lately come to reside in a beautiful seat in Gloucestershire called Tortworth Castle.

Lord Ducie had only just succeeded to the estate, and, while residing at the Castle for the first time, his lordship went on Sunday, to the parish church, and there he saw the aisles filled with a great number of poor children. He noticed that they behaved very well, and, instead of running out of church rudely, at the close of the service, they formed in ranks quietly, two and two, and walked away. Lord Ducie was so surprised that he stopped at the church to enquire what it meant. When his lordship heard that this was a Sunday-school in which poor children were taught to read and learn catechism and hymns, and were kept out of mischief, he was so pleased that he promised to help Mr. Raikes, and the other gentlemen who had established Sunday-schools, with money, and in every other way that he could.

And so another year passed away, and Mr. Raikes' school, as well as the others in Gloucester, succeeded so well, that, in 1783, there were nearly 300 Sunday scholars, and more were coming every week. The streets of the town were now quiet on a Sunday, and one day Mr. Raikes asked Mr. Church, who was a manufacturer of hemp and flax, and who employed a number of children,

whether they were improved since Sunday-schools had been established.

"Sir," he replied, "the change is wonderful. They were perfect little savages before, more like wolves and tigers than human creatures. Now you can see they are not like ignorant brutes; they are more obedient, more easily managed, and less quarrelsome and revengeful."

Robert Raikes was delighted to hear all this, as our readers may suppose. Do the little boys and girls in our Sunday-schools now, learn to be obedient and dutiful, and less quarrelsome and revengeful as quickly as the poor little ragged, neglected children did in Gloucester a hundred years ago?

Mr. Raikes was the editor and publisher of a newspaper in Gloucester, and now that Sunday-schools seemed to be doing so much good, he determined to print a long account of them in his newspaper, but he did not mention how much of this had been his own wŏrk. He wanted to make Sunday-schools known, not to obtain praise for himself.

Among those who read this paper were several clergymen and others, who also pitied the poor neglected children of the towns in which they lived, and more than one school was established in consequence.

The most important of these was opened in a large town called Painswick, not many miles from Gloucester, by a gentleman named Webb. The children here were as savage and filthy in their habits and conversation as those at Gloucester, but, so wonderful was the effect of Sunday teaching upon them, that in less than a year their appearance and behaviour were quite changed, and more than 200 children attended the school.

By this time, Sunday-schools had been talked of in London, and, indeed, all over England, and many good and great men wrote to Mr. Raikes and others, in great praise of what had been done. One of these was the poet Cowper, whose hymn, beginning,

> "God moves in a mysterous way
> His wonders to perform,"

is so well known. And another was John Wesley, the founder of the Society of Wesleyan Methodists. In one of his letters to a friend, he wrote—

"I verily think these schools are one of the noblest systems that have been set on foot in England, since the time of William the Conqueror."

Several Bishops also wrote and preached about them, and encouraged those who established Sunday-schools. Six young men, who were Wesleyans, in 1784, started the first school in *Chelsea.*

AN OLD-FASHIONED SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Their leader was named Richard Rodda, and these young men having drawn up their rules, sent them to the Bishop of Chester, who quite approved of the plan, and promised to help them.

Some of our readers may know, perhaps, that John Wesley's family were nearly all clever musicians. Many of the tunes we now sing to hymns and psalms were composed by Charles Wesley, the brother of John ; and therefore in all the Sunday-schools established by Methodists, as well as by church people, the children were taught to sing properly. The first school noted for its singing was at Bolton, and it was also remarkable as being the first in which the teachers taught without payment.

John Wesley used to be very proud of the school at Bolton; he would speak with pleasure of the children being so clean and neat ; and he said once," that when they all sang together, and none of them out of tune, the melody was far beyond the music of any theatre."

The managers of Sunday-schools in those days and in places where the children's parents were very poor, used to give them sometimes food for the body as well as for the mind ; among these were the schools at Painswick. Mr. Raikes always took a great interest in these schools, and he used to tell the story of what happened on the day after

Christmas Day, 1785, just a year after the first school had been opened. A beautiful dinner of roast beef and pudding and potatoes was provided for 350 children ; for in one year that number had become Sunday scholars. Those who gave the feast carved for them, and waited upon them.

Mr. Raikes, who was there, noticed among the children, a boy, who, when a plate was set before him, did not attempt to eat.

"What is the matter, my boy?" he asked.

"Please, Sir," said the poor child, "I ain't had nothin' to eat for three days, and I can't eat now."

"Poor child," said the gentleman, "I'll tell you what to do, just eat one or two little pieces and you'll soon be all right, your appetite will come."

The boy obeyed, and in a few minutes Mr. Raikes was pleased to see that he was eating his dinner with great enjoyment.

Another boy, who sat near this one, seemed to possess such a good appetite that, when he had finished, Mr. Raikes said to him, "I suppose you haven't had a meal like this since last year?"

"No, Sir," was the reply, "nor for three years neyther."

No wonder the poor boy enjoyed his dinner. The good people at Painswick were like Mr. Raikes, just the persons to make their Sunday scholars fond of their schools and useful as well.

After teaching them to read the Bible and learn about God on Sundays, they very wisely proposed that they should also help themselves to get decent clothes. A clothing club was therefore formed. Each child brought a penny weekly, and when his name was called dropped it into a box. At the end of the year, the children's pennies amounted to £36! Little boys and girls who spend a penny and think nothing of it, will, no doubt, wonder at this. But there is a good old proverb, "Take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves."

And now a number of kind friends came forward, and added many pounds to the children's pennies, and bought clothes for them with the whole of it. No wonder that the Painswick School children looked so neat that strangers were surprised; and one day a gentleman spoke to a well-dressed boy about it in the street and asked him how it was.

"Please, Sir," said the boy, "I paid three shillings towards these clothes myself, and the gentry paid the rest."

"But there is a poor boy all in rags," said the gentleman, pointing to another boy; "how is it that you are dressed so much better than he is?"

"Oh, sir, he don't belong to our parish," replied the boy. "Where he lives they've got no

Sunday-schools, nor nothing. People there take more care of the pigs than they does of the poor children. They beasts has lots to eat, but the boys and girls who has poor fathers and mothers are just starved, and have only rags to cover them."

"Well, I hope they'll soon have Sunday-schools, and kind friends to teach them, like you have, my boy," said the gentleman, as he turned away.

And now we have a pleasant task—to give a description of the first Sunday-school anniversary. For many years there had been held in Painswick an annual festival on the 24th of July, which would have been a disgrace even to heathen nations. Drunkenness, riot, noise, quarrelling, and fighting among the lower classes, filled the town, and alarmed the more peaceful inhabitants.

After the establishment of Sunday-schools, Mr. Webb, the gentleman who had chiefly conducted the schools at Painswick, called upon Mr. Raikes, and expressed his fear of what might be the effects of this annual festival on the Sunday scholars. After talking over the matter together, the two great friends of Sunday-schools arranged a plan which they hoped would do good, and show the people of the parish how much better and happier it was to be quiet and orderly than to

act like savages, as they had been accustomed to do.

So they sent invitations to the gentry around, and to the inhabitants of the neighbouring parishes, to attend the parish church of Painswick on that day, for the purpose of inspecting the children of the Sunday-schools.

Several musical gentlemen came forward to assist in the singing and the Church services, in which the children were to join; and Mr. Raikes' friend, Dr. Glasse, promised to preach the sermon.

Mr. Fox, a London merchant, who was also greatly interested in Sunday-schools, and did much for them, with magistrates and others, promised to be present.

The summer day dawned, and what a different day it was to be! The town certainly was filled with the usual crowds who attended the feast; but, instead of going to the alehouses, they hastened to the church, for the children were to be present at afternoon service.

No one could remember seeing such a crowd at any church in the county before. The pews, the galleries, and the aisles, were thronged. But how surprised they had been as they passed through the churchyard to see nearly 350 children drawn up in a rank round it, while the gentlemen visitors

walked by, and looked at them with wonder. Here were boys and girls who, a year ago, had been neglected, ignorant, ragged, profane, and filthy in words and habits; and now, there they stood—quiet, well-behaved, respectful, and neatly and cleanly dressed.

Then they walked quietly to their places in church, and joined in the singing and the responses.

Dr. Glasse chose a text for his sermon that made everybody listen. It was taken from Deut. xxxi., 12, 13. If our readers will find the text they will understand how suitable it must have been. The sermon was afterwards published, at the request of several gentlemen who had heard it. After the service, a collection was made for the schools, and Mr. Raikes, who had not expected it would be a large one, because most of the congregation were farmers and labouring men, was greatly astonished to find that it amounted to nearly £60!

But some of the farmers said afterwards to him, "We be glad to help yer schules, Maister Raikes; coz afore they was begun uz couldna leave our farms and gardens to go to church or ony where, without some un there to take care of the house, because of they young thieves; but it's all safe now when we goes away from hoame."

No wonder the farmers were glad to help Mr. Raikes and the other gentlemen to keep up the schools, which changed the neglected, ignorant children so greatly.

More than one circumstance happened at this anniversary which cheered the hearts of these kind promoters of Sunday-schools. A carpenter put a guinea in the plate at the collection. The next morning he called upon Mr. Webb, and said, "Sir, I've seen so much good done by Sunday-schools that I made up my mind to give all I received for a certain job towards helping them. I was paid five guineas, sir; but I only put one in the plate yesterday. I did not think it would become me to put in more before all those people, as if I was proud of doing it; so I've brought the other four guineas to you."

Mr. Webb hardly knew how to thank the good carpenter enough, he felt so very grateful for this help. But another visitor came to see him after the carpenter, who pleased him equally, perhaps even more.

He appeared to be an old English yeoman, about eighty years of age; and while talking to Mr. Webb, he said, "Oh, sir, to think that I should live to see this day, when poor children are taught the road to peace and comfort here, and happiness and heaven hereafter! I've brought you a guinea,

sir, for my subscription, and I'll leave another in the hands of a friend for you, in case I should die before the next anniversary."

The schools at Painswick seem to have been model schools, and Mr. Raikes was very fond of writing about their success in his newspaper. The children were working at their looms all the week, and had no teaching but on Sundays; and yet at the time of the second anniversary two hundred and thirty could read the Bible and repeat hymns, as well as sing and join in the responses at church.

What attention they must have paid to their teachers, and how industrious they must have been! Are our Sunday scholars now, with all their advantages, as attentive and earnest as these once poor neglected, ragged children at Painswick?

CHAPTER VI.

MR. RAIKES VISITS THE QUEEN.

NOT far from the Forest of Dean, in Gloucestershire, is a little town, named Micheldean, in which a school was established about a year after the first school at Painswick. The boys and girls were a careless set at this time, but twelve months afterwards, when Mr. Raikes went to their anniversary, he found them quite changed. Some of their clothes were still very ragged; yet, they were clean, and

walked to church two and two in great order. On arriving, they were placed in the gallery, in full view of the whole congregation, and behaved during the service in a most becoming manner.

They had not yet learned to repeat the lessons, but Mr. Raikes was quite touched at hearing them all join in the Lord's Prayer—children that, a year ago, had been profane and wicked in their ways, and did not even know there was a God. Mr. Raikes, however, found several clever children among them, who had learnt to repeat whole chapters from the New Testament. Nearly fifty of them were quite perfect in their catechism, and they all took great pleasure in learning Dr. Watts' hymns. Mr. Raikes saw two or three that could repeat the whole of the book.

And he discovered singers among them, also; for, after dinner, Mr. Fox, who, as we know, was greatly interested in these schools, and with whom Mr. Raikes was dining, sent for six of the boys, and desired them to sing a hymn they had been taught, which they did admirably.

Among the singers was a very ill-looking lad, whom Mr. Raikes noticed, and after they were gone he spoke of the boy to Mr. Fox.

"Ah, yes," replied the gentleman, "the Sunday-school has done wonders for him. He is about thirteen years of age, and was once the

most profligate young dog in the neighbourhood. He was the leader in every kind of wickedness and mischief. He never opened his lips without a profane or indecent word; and now he has become orderly, good natured, quiet, and well behaved, and can talk without using profane or improper words."

The music and singing at Micheldean schools did not yet equal that at Painswick, but we shall hear how they improved by-and-by as the story proceeds.

By the year 1787, Sunday-schools had been established in many English towns, among others at Manchester, on the Mendip Hills, in Somersetshire, and even at Windsor. The ladies of fashion would spend their Sundays in teaching the poorest children. It is also said that the first Sunday-school in London was established in 1784, in connection with the Rev. Rowland Hill's congregation at Surrey Chapel.

In 1789, the Bishop of Salisbury, speaking of Sunday-schools, stated that there were not less than three hundred thousand scholars in the Sunday-schools of Great Britain and Ireland, and all this in nine years. The Rev. Thomas Charles was the first to commence Sunday-schools at Bala, in Wales, in 1785, and they very soon spread over the whole country. Among the scholars more

than half were grown-up people, who had never been taught to read, and in a school at Bangor there was a class of old people, who all wore spectacles.

About this time, when Sunday-schools were becoming known all over the world, and so many had been established, Mr. Fox proposed that a society should be formed for their management and support throughout the kingdom of Great Britain. A committee was therefore instituted, among whom were Mr. William Fox, Mr. Raikes, Mr. Jonas Hanway, Mr. Henry Thornton, Mr. Samuel Hoare, and many others. This Society was founded in August, 1785, and entitled "The Sunday School Society." At the time of which we write, George, the grandfather of Queen Victoria, was King of England. He used to say, "It is my wish that every poor child in my kingdom shall be taught to read the Bible."

King George and his wife, Queen Charlotte, with their children, lived sometimes at Windsor Castle, as Queen Victoria does now. Of course the King and Queen had heard about Sunday-schools, and were already very much interested in them. At Christmas, 1787, Mr. Raikes went to spend a week or two with some relatives at Windsor.

Hearing that he was in the neighbourhood,

ROBERT RAIKES AND QUEEN CHARLOTTE.

Queen Charlotte sent for him ; without delay, he hastened to wait upon Her Majesty, and was received most kindly. After a little conversation on the subject, the Queen asked him, "How did you come to think of such a plan to save the children of the poor, Mr. Raikes?" In reply, Mr. Raikes told Her Majesty about what he had seen of the factory children at Gloucester, and all that is described in these pages respecting his first schools.

The Queen listened with great interest, and the conversation lasted for more than an hour. In a letter to a friend, Mr. Raikes writes :—

"After listening to my account of the improvement shown by the children, in consequence of Sunday-schools, Her Majesty most graciously said that she envied those who could do so much good personally among the poor, as she was deprived of this pleasure by her position as Queen."

Mr. Raikes never boasted of this interview with Queen Charlotte in his paper, but no doubt he was very proud of the honour.

Mrs. Trimmer, a lady who wrote many nice books for young people, lived at this period. She had Sunday-schools at Brentford, which Mr. Raikes visited.

Mrs. Trimmer became a great favourite at the

Palace, and with her assistance Sunday-schools were established at Windsor.

Mr. Raikes was again noticed by royalty, in the year 1788, when George III., Queen Charlotte, and three of the young Princesses, spent a month at Cheltenham, a place as fashionable then as it is now.

Miss Burney, afterwards Madame D'Arblay, the great writer, was among the Queen's attendants. This lady gives a very pleasing account of what happened on this visit; for Cheltenham is not far from Gloucester. She and one of the maids of honour, Miss Planta, drove into Gloucester one evening, and called upon Mr. Raikes. She states that when she met the founder of Sunday-schools she looked at him with reverence, as the man who could first suggest such an undertaking. She speaks of Mrs. Raikes as a quiet, unpretending woman, yet calls his daughters "country misses," and ends by saying, "They gave us a grand breakfast, and then did the honours of the city."

But more honour was in store for Mr. Raikes; when the King and Queen and the Royal Princesses visited Gloucester, and were guests of the Bishop, and in their visits to the cathedral, the pin factory, the Infirmary, and the new prisons, Mr. Raikes was frequently brought under the notice of the *King*. *But he* never referred to this in his paper;

the wonderful success attending his efforts in Sunday-school was more gratifying to him than would have been the highest notice from Royalty; and after the Royal Family left Cheltenham he again threw himself, heart and soul, into his much loved work.

In 1788, schools were founded on the Mendip Hill, in Somersetshire, by Mrs. Hannah More and her sister. Mrs. Hannah More was a writer for the young in those days, two of her books, named, "The Advantages of Early Piety," and "Sacred Dramas," are still well known and read.

Before starting her school, this lady paid a visit from house to house all through the village. In returning she met a friend, who asked where she had been.

"Calling at every house to get up Sunday scholars," she replied.

"I should think schools of some sort were needed here," said her friend.

"Needed!" she exclaimed, "never more than here; I have met with the greatest ignorance every where, and no little vice and wickedness. In only one house was a Bible to be found, and that was used to prop up a flower-pot!"

But this energetic lady was not discouraged, she began her schools, and in five years in such a wild country district as that round the Mendip Hills,

not only were there more than two hundred children in attendance at the schools, but the same number of grown up people.

No large steamboats existed at the time of which we write, to take people to America in ten, nine, or even eight days, as now ; none but sailing vessels, that were sometimes three months performing the voyage from London to New York. No telegraph wires to send messages under the ocean, so that those who had friends in America could only hear from them or write to them by the mail, which carried the letters to different parts of America in two, three, or even four months.

Mr. Raikes and his Sunday-schools, however, were at last heard of and talked about in that great country, so many thousand miles away from us over the sea. Yet it was not till six years after the establishment of Mr. Raikes' schools in Gloucester, that the first Sunday-school was established in America, in 1786.

The young readers of this account of Sunday-schools, who can have so many beautiful stories to read, will be, perhaps, surprised to find that the Sunday scholars a hundred years ago had no reading books but the Bible, the Prayer Book, and Dr. Watts' Hymns.

In 1794, when Sunday-schools had existed for fourteen years, a little book was published, and

named "The Sunday Scholar's Companion." It contained verses from the Bible, at first with easy words, and then becoming more difficult by degrees. The first half of the book contained the alphabet, then reading and spelling lessons in words of one and two syllables; also a few prayers for children, an easy catechism, and some hymns, with rules for behaviour at school—but no stories.

And now our readers have heard how Sunday-schools were first established; and in fifteen years, when the number of Sunday scholars in Great Britain had increased from fifty to many hundreds of thousands, we have some pleasant stories to relate about these scholars—accounts that came to good Robert Raikes, and made his heart glad. The first is called,

"The Sea Boy's Grave."

A large ship was sailing towards home from the West Indies during the autumn of the year 1787. On board this vessel was a cabin boy, named John Pelham; but the crew called him "Jack Raikes."

Jack had been one of the earliest of the Sunday scholars in Mr. Raikes' school, and there he had learnt to be a good and God-fearing lad. Sailors in those days were not so well taught as they are now. Very few even had a Bible on board, and they

thought nothing of swearing and using bad language.

Jack, who had been taught better things, would bring out his Bible to read, and kneel down to say his prayers, without caring for being laughed at. He never uttered an improper word, although they would try to provoke him often; and at last one who could read saw the name of Robert Raikes on Pelham's Bible, and gave him the name of "Jack Raikes." But the boy was so good-tempered, and performed his duties as cabin boy so well, that the captain was pleased with his conduct, and would not allow him to be annoyed.

One sailor, however, who was worse than the rest, often behaved very unkindly to the boy, mocking and jeering him about his religion when no one was near to take his part. But he never complained.

At last, this wicked sailor was struck down with fever, and not expected to live. To the surprise of everyone on board, Jack Raikes asked to be allowed to nurse him, which he did as tenderly as a woman. One day, when the sick man was able to recognise his nurse, Jack brought him some cooling drink, and put it to his lips. But, as he did so, the man looked up, and, pushing back the cup, said, "What, you here, Jack Raikes, tending *me!*"

"Yes, of course I am; now drink this, and then I'll give you your medicine."

The man obeyed in silence; but, after drinking the medicine, he said, "How can ye do all this for me, boy, when I've been sich a brute to ye?"

"You must try and go to sleep now," replied Jack; "by-and-by, when you're better, Tom, I'll tell ye all about it."

And Jack kept his word. When the sick man became strong enough to listen, he read the Bible to him, and described all he had heard at school about the Saviour, till at last the hard heart melted, and the man mourned over his wicked conduct, as he thought of his mis-spent life. He did not get well, as Jack hoped he would, but gradually sunk and died; not, however, till he had blessed God for sending him such good news by the boy whom he had treated so unkindly.

Jack shed tears when he saw, for the first time, a burial at sea. How little he thought then what would happen to himself.

A few days after the sailor's burial, and when they were nearing home, a great storm arose; the ship was driven out of her course, and struck on a rock on the northern coast of Scotland.

The sailors, as a last chance, took to the boats. The one in which Jack Raikes placed himself, after

struggling in vain against the angry waves, was overturned, and all on board perished.

Next morning the captain of the vessel, who with a few of the sailors had reached land safely in another boat, found the poor boy's body, with a number of others that had strewed the shore, and had been carried to the neighbouring alehouse.

There was something so calm and sweet in the expression of the dead boy's face, that the captain who tells the story could not help stooping down and cutting off a lock of auburn hair that lay on his forehead, as a relic. But other relics were taken from his pockets which showed that, although poor, he was yet rich.

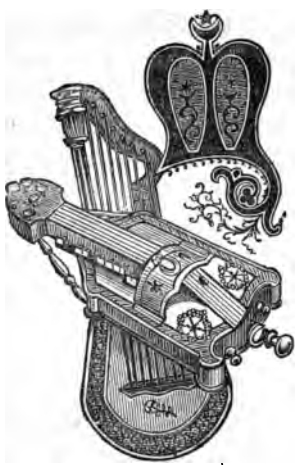
In a little leather purse were found a well-kept half-crown and a sixpence, all his earthly possessions. But near the boy lay the source of greater riches, a small Bible, with brass clasps, on which were engraved these words,

"THE GIFT OF ROBERT RAIKES TO
J. R. PELHAM."

It does not say in the story whether Mr. Raikes ever heard all this about his first Sunday scholar, but most likely he did, and if so, it would make him very happy. This is another example for Sunday scholars, who have so many and great advantages now, to imitate.

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY.



MOST of our readers know that George I., of the House of Hanover or Brunswick, became King of Great Britain and Ireland when Queen Anne died and left no children. George I. claimed the throne because his grandmother, the Princess Elizabeth, was the daughter of James I., who married the Elector of Hanover. Hanover, or Brunswick, is a country of Germany, and the Germans are often clever musicians, and very fond of music.

George III., who was the grandson, not the son, of George II., inherited this love of music, and he was so anxious that the English people should become better musicians, that he invited several clever men to come and reside in England, and amongst them Handel, whom he requested to compose oratorios, that is, to write beautiful music suited to the words of the Bible.

Handel wrote several of these oratorios more than a hundred years ago, and they are still admired by thousands, who go to listen to them when they are performed at the Albert Hall and other places. Sunday-schools being established just when sacred music and singing were becoming of more importance in England, the children were not only taught to sing in Church, but even to take part in oratorios at the anniversaries. The first Sunday Schools that introduced these oratorios were those of Micheldean. This fact is known from an advertisement which appeared in the pages of Mr. Raikes' newspaper.

In this it is stated that at the School Anniversary anthems would be sung, composed by Handel, Boyce, Hayes, and others, as well as several selections from Handel's great oratorio, "The Messiah," to conclude in the morning with the "Hallelujah Chorus," and in the evening with "The Coronation Anthem." Many well-known

gentlemen were to sing, and to be accompanied with a large number of musical instruments besides the organ. English people were then becoming so fond of this beautiful music, that they would fill the churches at anniversaries as much to hear the music as to see the children. Many good people in those days thought it wrong to have so much music and singing in the churches, but it made Sunday-schools known, and gained for them on these occasions large collections.

Singing and music cannot be wrong if they are not used for sinful purposes, because we read of music in heaven, and of angels singing to their harps. God has also given to many men, women, and children, sweet voices, a correct ear, and a power to understand and love beautiful melodies. But to sing holy words while the thoughts are wandering on vanity and folly, must be displeasing to God. We should remember the words of St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xiv. 15, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

Sunday-schools had been established more than twenty years, when a difficulty arose about supplying so many children with Bibles and Testaments. Hitherto many friends had sent parcels of Bibles and Testaments, at various times, to keep the Schools supplied; but these holy books then were so very expensive, and far too dear to be bought.

by the poor. The first to notice this fact was the Rev. Mr. Charles, who had founded the Welsh Schools in Bala; and he was led to do so by a little girl.

Walking one day through the streets of the town, he met a Sunday scholar who attended his church, and spoke to her. Presently he asked, "Were you at Church last Sunday, my little girl?'

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"Can you tell me the text?"

Instead of repeating the words at once, as she had often done before, the child looked confused, and remained silent.

"Why do you not speak?" he asked, in surprise.

"Oh, sir," she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "the weather has been so bad, I couldn't get to read the Bible."

"Could not get to read the Bible because of the weather," said the clergyman; "how was that?"

"Please, sir, there's no Welsh Bible at home, and nobody's got one about here, so I've got to walk every week to a place on the hills, where there's a good old man and woman has got a Bible, and they lets me read the chapter and learn the text."

"And how far off is the cottage of these good old people?"

"Seven miles, sir; but I don't mind that, when the weather's fine."

Seven miles to read the Bible? I'm afraid some young people now would grumble at having to walk half a mile even to read God's holy book.

Mr. Charles thought over this want of Bibles seriously, and next time he went to London he asked his friends to help him in forming a society to supply Bibles at a cheap rate to the people of Wales. His friend, the Rev. Mr. Hughes, readily agreed to assist him, but said it must be a society to supply Bibles, not only to Wales, but to the whole world, and in every language.

Thus from the words of a little girl who wished to read the Bible, a Society was formed in 1804, called "The British and Foreign Bible Society," which every year now supplies millions of cheap Bibles and Testaments to every part of the world.

But we must not forget that in the year before this, 1803, another great Society was formed to supply good and cheap books to Sunday scholars in every town and village in England and Ireland, and to all parts of the world.

What Sunday scholar does not know the books sold by the "Sunday School Union," as well as the picture cards and large illuminated texts and Bible maps. This society has been in existence for nearly eighty years; and grown-up people,

and old people, too, will tell you how they used to look forward every month, when they were young, for "The Youth's Magazine," the "Child's Own Book," the "Child's Companion," and the many other magazines, which all contained such delightful stories for those days, when almost the only books for children were "Goody Two Shoes," "Jack the Giant Killer," "Tom Thumb," and others equally silly. And so the years passed on, and now and then Mr. Raikes would hear of one and another of his old scholars accounts that would make his heart leap for joy.

Mr. Raikes was entering the cathedral one week-day morning, when he overtook a soldier just at the door. "I'm very glad to see you going to a place of worship," said Mr. Raikes to the young man, as he passed, "especially as it is a week-day."

"Ah, sir," he replied, "I may thank you for that."

"Thank me?" said Mr. Raikes, "why, I don't think I ever saw you before."

"Yes, you have, sir, often, when I was a boy at your school; don't you remember Tom Ford?"

"Of course I do, my lad," replied the gentleman, grasping the soldier's hand and shaking it warmly; but how could I recognise the boy in such a tall soldier. Where are you stationed?"

"I belong to the Westminster Militia, sir, and

I came here to Gloucester last night with a deserter; so I thought I'd have a look this morning at the old place, and hoping to see you, too, sir. Lor, sir, it seems all so natural. I often used to meet you at this cathedral with the other boys when we came to the morning service."

"Is your father living still?" asked Mr. Raikes.

"Yes, sir. When he left this city, he took me with him to Berkshire. I was fifteen then, and he put me apprentice to a shoemaker. I used often to think of you, sir, especially after I went to London to be a journeyman. But I was drawn for the Militia, and have to serve at certain times."

"Father and mother often talk about your Sunday-schools, and father's doing well in Berkshire, and they both say its all through you and the Schools."

Mr. Raikes could not reply, but as they entered the cathedral together, his thoughts went back with thankfulness to the day when God first put it into his heart to begin a Sunday-school.

On one occasion, Mr. Raikes went to visit some friends in Hertfordshire, and while there he was found out by a young sailor to whom he had once given a Bible. His name was James North, and he used to say he had belonged to one of the first Sunday-schools when seven years old, and was one of the oldest Sunday scholars in England.

Many years ago this sailor was present at a tea meeting in connection with Tottenham-court-road Chapel, London, where he attended, and the minister spoke of him as a very enlightened and devoted man.

He was proud of showing his Bible which had been given to him by Mr. Raikes, and in his speech at the tea meeting he brought it forward, and said, "I'm sixty-two years of age, ladies and gentlemen, and Mr. Raikes gave me this Bible on the 1st of January, 1781, when I was seven years old, and I've kept it ever since, and had it bound afresh two years ago." Then he opened the Bible and pointed out what was written on the fly leaf:—

"This Bible was presented to me by Mr. Raikes, at the town of Hertford, January 1st, 1781, as a reward for my punctual attendance at the Sunday-school, and my good behaviour when there; and, after being my companion fifty-three years, forty-one of which I spent in the sea-service, during which time I was in forty-five engagements, received thirteen wounds, was three times ship-wrecked, once burnt out, twice capsized in a boat, and had fevers of different sorts fifteen times. This Bible was my consolation, and was newly bound for me by James Bishop, of Edinburgh, on the 26th day of October, 1834, the

day I completed the sixtieth year of my age, as witness my hand, "JAMES B. NORTH."

Children, as well as grown people, may be quite sure that God will bless them, and give them success in what they undertake, if they go to work in the right way. We need not be surprised at reading of the success of Sunday-schools, for Mr. Raikes began at the right end, and taught his scholars to read the Bible. It must have cost him a great deal of money to give away so many Bibles as rewards, while they were so dear before "The British and Foreign Bible Society" was formed. But he had his reward. All the boys he heard of who became good men, like James North and the poor sailor boy, were those to whom he had given Bibles.

Among the earliest of the Sunday scholars at Gloucester was a little boy very fond of music, who always attended the morning service at the Cathedral. He was so regular in his attendance that at last Mr. Raikes noticed him, and one day asked him if he could read.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Well, then," said Mr. Raikes, "ask your father to bring you to my office; and if you can read a chapter in the New Testament, I will give you a new Bible."

The boy was delighted at the prospect of such a

handsome gift, and ran home in great glee to tell his father. Next day he was brought by his father to Mr. Raikes' office, eagerly anxious to earn the reward. The Testament was laid open on a desk, but the boy was so little that he could not reach high enough to read it.

"You must have a stool to stand upon, my lad," said the kind gentleman, as he brought one forward himself, and placed it in front of the desk. The boy mounted the stool, and the book being open at the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Mr. Raikes told him to read it.

Our readers will remember that this chapter contains many names which are long and difficult; but the little fellow read them all, and the whole chapter so well, that Mr. Raikes was quite pleased.

Then he took down a beautiful Bible, and after writing the boy's name in it, gave it to him, and said, "I hope, my boy, you will never forget to read this book, for in it you will learn not only to do your duty, and be a good boy in this world, but how to please God and believe in His dear Son, Jesus Christ." This little boy's name is not mentioned, nor do we know whether he was ever heard of by Robert Raikes from the time he left school; but several years after the death of that good man, this boy wrote a letter to the *Gloucester Journal*.

In this newspaper he said that he was then a

THE TEST.

very old man, but that he should never forget that good man, Mr. Robert Raikes, and the schools he had founded in Gloucester. Then he told the story of having stood on a stool in Mr. Raikes' office to read a chapter, and how he had won the Bible, which he still possessed, although it was eighty years old, and he was himself eighty-eight.

We can only hope that Robert Raikes before he died knew all about this good man, who went on to say in his letter, that in this Bible he had learnt, not only to be "diligent in business," but "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" all his long life.

We must not forget to tell our readers about Molly Turner and George Weaver, who quarrelled with Harry Todd, and were among the first Sunday scholars of Robert Raikes.

Molly never forgot that Sunday, when Mr. Raikes begged her mother to forgive her, because she wouldn't ask for herself. She grew up a kind and good daughter, and after her marriage to Harry Todd, who was then a respectable carpenter in the town, she took her mother to reside with them, and never again allowed her to work for her living. Good Mr. Raikes lived long enough to see not only Molly's children at the Sunday-school, but many children and even grandchildren of his earliest scholars.

It must not be supposed that every child in these

first Sunday-schools grew up to be good and to love God, especially those who when they entered were above eleven or twelve years, and the children of wicked parents. There was a part of Gloucester, outside South Gate, named Littleworth, in which the worst characters lived; yet even here, after the children went to the Sunday-schools, the people living near said it was like heaven now to what it used to be.

George Weaver was one of the Littleworth boys, and, as our readers will remember, was the the boy who began to quarrel and fight with Harry Todd, on a Sunday, after they had left school. Mr. Raikes had been very anxious about this boy, who did not attend school regularly, and after a time he lost sight of him altogether. More than once he had actually ventured among the thieves and bad characters in Littleworth to visit the boy's home. But on one occasion the wretched mother shut the door in his face, when the father was at home. On another occasion she admitted him to her wretched room, and exclaimed, "Oh, zur, and I didna dare to let you in t'other day; my husband war drunk, and I was feared he'd do summut bad to ye."

"But where's your son?" asked Mr. Raikes.

"I can't tell ye naught about un. He's going *arter his fayther*, that's sartin."

After a few hopeful words and kind advice, Mr. Raikes hastened from the place, almost hopeless of saving the boy from the effects of the evil which surrounded him.

One day a message came to Mr. Raikes from the Gaol Infirmary, to say that a dying man wished to see him.

Without a moment's hesitation he hastened to comply with the poor man's request. On entering the ward, and asking for the patient, Mr. Raikes saw a man, of about forty years of age, perfectly unknown to him, lying on a bed; yet the face reminded him of someone he knew.

"Oh, sir; oh, Mr. Raikes," said the man, earnestly, "don't you know me, sir?"

"No, my friend," he replied, pressing gently the wasted hand that lay on the bed.

The action touched the sufferer; the tears rose in his eyes as he replied, "I don't deserve kindness, sir; I'm the father of George Weaver that used to go to your school. I've made him as bad as myself, and now he's gone off, and I don't know what's become of him."

"Don't be unhappy, I'll try to find him; but now about yourself. Why do you wish to see me?"

"To thank you, sir, for all you've done for me."

"In what way, my friend?"

"Sir," he replied, "I'm not a Gloucester man, and I've had a good education; but before I was twenty bad companions got hold of me, and they led me wrong, and I went from bad to worse, till a lot of us came down to Cheltenham and robbed a house. We were all caught, and sent to the old castle prison, at Southgate. Ah, sir, can I ever forget that dreadful place; no, sir. No light, nothing to sit on but the floor, and nothing to eat—all crammed in together, and sixty or seventy of us. A fever broke out, and three of the prisoners died, and I had a narrow escape myself; and then you came to see us, and got money for us to buy food that we might not starve. And 'twas worse in the debtors' prison, and amongst the women and children; oh, so many died!" and he gasped for breath.

"I know, I know, my friend; don't excite yourself, it's better now."

"Yes, sir, through you and Mr. Howard. Look at this clean, airy place where I'm lying; and I've been in London prisons, and they're like this, only larger."

"What! did not the first disgrace save you?"

"No, sir, I'm sorry to say. I've been in prison many times; and once I was sent to Botany Bay for stealing two geese. Oh, I wonder that *dreadful long sea* voyage didn't cure me; but it

didn't. After my seven years was over I worked my way home on board ship, and came here." And again he paused.

"My poor fellow, I dare say it is a relief to tell me all this; but have you told it to God?"

"Yes, sir,. I have; and I thank Him for the Sunday-school that you opened. I'm afraid it didn't do George much good, because of my example. Sir, I was reckless; I didn't care; I got drunk and hated work, although I'd been taught a good trade as a builder, and worked sometimes. Then God, in His mercy, allowed me to fall from a ladder without being killed; but I'm so injured, I shall never get well; and He has given me time for repentance."

"You seem to know what is right, my friend," said Mr. Raikes.

"Oh yes, sir, I was taught good things in my youth; but I forgot them all, till one day George brought home a Testament and Watts' hymns from school. 'Twas they did it, sir; I used to read them when I was by myself. So God sent them to me by you. I'm glad I began to feel sorry for my wickedness before my accident."

"Do you believe you are forgiven?"

"I try to hope so, sir, for the sake of Jesus Christ; although I am so much worse than others, for I'd been taught better; and oh, sir, God will

bless you for having Sunday-schools to teach poor children good things, and for doing so much for the poor prisoners, even before good Mr. Howard."

"And now you must be quiet, Weaver," said Mr Raikes, rising; "but I'll come and see you again, to-morrow, and I will pray for you."

"And my boy, sir, and my poor wife?" he said, faintly.

"I will go and see your wife, and do all I can to find George, I promise you that;" and, with another gentle pressure of the hand, the good man left the ward saddened but not hopeless.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HILL DIFFICULTY.

JOHN BUNYAN, in his "Pilgrim's Progress," makes the Hill Difficulty very steep for poor Christian, but he knows it is the right way, and he resolutely clambers up, sometimes on his hands and knees, till he reaches the top. There is no right path in life which has not a "Hill Difficulty," as well as the Christian's path, because to human nature it is always easier to go wrong. Learning lessons correctly is a difficulty in the learner's path. Idleness and late rising are often preferred in business, in housekeeping, or in any

other undertaking, because industry and early rising, which are hills of difficulty, and must be climbed in the road to success, are not so easy and pleasant. Mr. Raikes had many difficulties to encounter in his anxiety that his Sunday-schools should succeed, with God's blessing, in making his scholars grow up good and industrious men and women; but he was never daunted by these difficulties.

We have heard from the poor dying man how much Mr. Raikes had done for the prisoners; yet, when he first visited that dreadful dungeon in the old castle, with its stone walls and floors, and no windows to the open air, with so many wretched starving people in it, that must have seemed a difficulty, but it did not daunt him. Nearly twenty years before he began his Sunday-schools, he had tried to improve the condition of the wretched, half-starved, half-naked men, women, and children who were crowded together in dirt and misery. He wrote about it in his paper, and got up subscriptions; and then, at last, that great man, Mr. John Howard, who was noted for visiting and helping the poor prisoners, came to Gloucester to see the gaols, and dined with Mr. Raikes.

This was seven years before he began his Sunday-schools, and it was after seeing all these poor creatures in prison for doing wicked things,

that he began to think half of them acted wrongly because they did not know any better. "If the children are taught to know there is a God, and to distinguish right from wrong, they will grow up better men and women," he said to himself.

When Robert Raikes and John Howard worked together, new prisons, and infirmaries, and workhouses were soon built, and the poor prisoners, like George Weaver's father, were thankful for the change.

In those days people thought anything was good enough for thieves and robbers, or those who committed dreadful crimes. But although they must be punished, we ought not to treat them cruelly, or allow them to die for want of cleanliness, food, and fresh air. Our Saviour's beautiful words teach us this, for in speaking of God as our Father, He says, "For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and on the unjust."

Mr. Raikes got over the prison difficulty, but he did not succeed in finding George Weaver, who was never heard of afterwards. Yet he did not despair; he hoped that the boy would never forget what he had learnt at the Sunday-school, and that God would take care of him.

Other founders of Sunday-schools had difficulties to overcome in many parts of England, even after

these Schools had been known for several years. In thirty years the number of children in Gloucester and all over England had so increased, that the Sunday School Society had, in fourteen years, paid £4,000 to the teachers, who received from 1s. to 2s. each Sunday. Now their funds began to fail, and as the teachers wouldn't teach without being paid, several schools even in Gloucester had to be closed, all but Mr. Raikes' own School.

Here was a "Hill Difficulty," but six good young men in Gloucester, who belonged to one of Lady Huntingdon's chapels, joined together, and determined to open the Sunday-school again and teach the children for nothing. They had no place to take them to, so they asked to be allowed to use the chapel. But the minister said "No, that cannot be, they will make too much noise." Then they applied to the trustees, and they said, "On no account could they have the children there, they would make the chapel quite dirty." After these refusals they appealed to some of the congregation to lend them a room.

"Quite useless," was the reply; "you will find no children to come, no teachers, and no money to pay the expenses."

Thus discouraged, these young men determined, with the blessing of God to act for themselves. One

night, after business hours, they met at a post in a lane in Gloucester, within twenty yards of the spot where Bishop Hooper was martyred. Here they stood, and, clasping each other by the hand, they reverently uncovered their heads, and resolved that, come what would, Sunday-schools in Gloucester should be re-established. As a fund to start with, they each subscribed half-a-crown, and then dividing the city into six districts, each took one, and went from house to house asking for Sunday scholars.

On the following Sunday more than a hundred children attended the school, and from that time Sunday-schools continued to flourish, and good young men and women were found ready to teach without payment. One of these young men was at that time a draper's assistant in Gloucester, but he afterwards was known as the Rev. John Adey, of Union Chapel, Horselydown, and subsequently of Bexley Heath, Kent. They, however, were not the first who acted as unpaid teachers in Sunday-schools. John Wesley, in his writings, speaks of the school at Bolton, in Yorkshire, in which the teachers gave their services for nothing. The Dissenters being the first to do this, it very soon happened that in every school, whether Church or Dissent, the teachers in Sunday-schools all over the world gave their services without payment, that the poor

children might be taught to read and learn the way of salvation.

Do our Sunday scholars ever think of this when they are inattentive or careless while their kind teachers are talking to them. Do they forget how sorry teachers must be if the hymns and verses are not learnt properly, or when they see their scholars laughing and playing, or quarrelling, or hear them tell untruths?

Perhaps they do forget, or do not think, but if they will try to remember that these kind people give up their rest on a Sunday, and leave their comfortable homes on purpose to teach them to read the Bible, and learn how to be good and happy on earth, and of the dear Saviour who died that they might go to heaven, they will perhaps try not to give them trouble, but to please them by their quiet and attentive behaviour.

At the time the six young men we have told you of were restoring the Sunday-schools in Gloucester, Mr. Raikes was a very old man, seventy-four years of age, but he was quite as much interested in Sunday-schools as ever. One day a young Quaker, named Joseph Lancaster, paid Robert Raikes a visit, and asked many questions about Sunday-schools and their origin. Mr. Raikes replied by telling him a great deal of *what has been* told in these pages.

In the evening the old gentleman, leaning on the arm of his young visitor, took a walk through Gloucester, and presently led him to the spot in a back street where the first school had been held.

"Pause here," said the old man. Then uncovering his head and closing his eyes, he stood for a moment in private prayer; then turning to his friend, while the tears rolled down his cheeks, he said,

"This is the spot on which I stood when I saw the wretchedness of the children and the manner in which they and their parents profaned the Sabbath. As I asked myself, 'Can nothing be done?' a voice seemed to answer 'TRY.' I did try, and see what God has wrought. I can never pass by the spot where the word 'try' came so strongly to my mind, without lifting up my hands and heart to heaven in gratitude to God for having put such a thought into my heart."

Presently Mr. Lancaster asked him whether he had any proof that the scholars had benefited by the teaching they received.

"Proofs," he replied, "yes, without number, from the children of the schools who are now grown up;" and then, pointing to the new prisons he continued, "I have also had a great deal to do with these prisons for many years; and I can safely say that of the three thousand children

whose education I have superintended, I have never seen one within those prison walls—*never*," he added with energy.

Joseph Lancaster seemed to have caught the old man's spirit, for he not only introduced a new system of teaching into schools, but formed a society for giving weekly instruction to the children of the poor. This association was afterwards known as "The British and Foreign School Society."

Robert Raikes had by this time finished his work. He had given up his newspaper to others; he had removed from the house in Palace Yard, under the shadow of the great Cathedral, and had resided for nearly eight years with his wife and family in a large, old-fashioned house in Bell Lane, Gloucester, which was still to be seen a few years ago. His health had been declining for some time, yet the end came upon him very quickly at last.

Towards the evening of the 5th of April, 1811, he complained of his chest. A doctor was sent for, but nothing could be done for him, and in less than an hour he died, in his seventy-sixth year.

Robert Raikes knew that he must one day die, and leave his schools and scholars to others, but *he had no fear.* By God's blessing on his under-

taking he had been wonderfully successful. Many clergymen and ministers were as interested in the schools as he was himself; and no doubt he looked forward to the future, when he should be gone, with a swelling heart and certainty that they would never fail.

Rich people were still ready to help with money, teachers who wanted no payment worked in the Schools that poor and neglected children might be taught to love God and His Son Jesus Christ; and societies to form Schools, raise subscriptions, and provide the children with Bibles and other books, were not wanting.

Added to this Mr. Raikes knew that the efforts of those who wished to save children from ignorance and sin, and to teach them the word of God, and how to please Him, must be pleasing in His sight, and was therefore sure to receive His blessing.

A hundred years have passed away since Robert Raikes founded Sunday-schools, and almost the youngest child knows that there are Sunday-schools now all over the world—schools where Hindoo children sit and learn the Bible and hymns in their own language, and sing them too. Schools in Africa and America for little black negroes; in China and Japan, and other nations who worship idols, and even in Zulu land; and in all these places and many others the children can read the

Bible and repeat hymns, and read many pretty books, too, in their own languages. And we who are living now, therefore, know that good Robert Raikes had true faith to believe that God would indeed bless Sunday-schools in the future.

How grieved the people of Gloucester were to lose him. Neither did he forget his Sunday scholars even at the very last, for he left orders that the scholars of his school should follow him to the grave, and each of them receive a shilling and a piece of plum cake. And his requests were attended to by his family at his funeral. He was buried in the family vault of the Church of St. Mary de Crypt. On a plain marble tablet, near his grave, are the words which occupy the next page—

Sacred to the Memory

OF

ROBERT RAIKES, Esq.,

LATE OF THIS CITY,

FOUNDER OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS;

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE

APRIL 5TH, 1811, AGED SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS.

When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him; Because he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him: and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.—JOB xxiv., 11, 12, 13.

But although Mr. Raikes was dead, the scholars and teachers in his first Schools were often heard of. The little boy who stood on a stool in Mr. Raikes' office, and received a Bible from him for reading a chapter in the Testament, was still living in 1861, less than twenty years ago. He was then eighty-seven years of age, and, as our readers know, wrote a letter about this Bible, which was printed in the *Gloucester Journal.*

James North, the old sailor who had kept the Bible given him by Mr. Raikes for fifty-five years, told the story at a tea meeting of the congregation of Tottenham Court Chapel when he was sixty-two years of age.

But there was another we have not yet mentioned—a good and pious man—who was a teacher in one of the first Sunday-schools at a village called Sheepscombe, five miles from Gloucester, founded by Mr. Samuel Webb, who had so much to do afterwards with establishing the Schools at Painswick. This good man's name was Twining, and he continued as a Sunday-school teacher at the Sheepscombe-school for forty-five years. Mr. Raikes, who often visited him, at one time gave him a Bible, in which he wrote his name and an inscription with his own hand. He used to say he was the oldest Sunday-school teacher living, and the *Committee of* the Sunday School Union on this

account allowed him a small annuity. Twining was still living in the year 1841, at the age of eighty-five.

And now we have only one circumstance to write of which need be told in this book, and that is "The Sunday School Jubilee," which took place on Mr. Raikes' birthday, September 14th, and in the year 1831, when Sunday-schools had existed for fifty years. It was first suggested by James Montgomery, the poet, who wrote two hymns for the children to sing. Mrs. Gilbert, the lady who, with her sister, Jane Taylor, wrote so many pretty hymns and stories in verse for children, wrote a third.

The teachers of the various schools met at early prayer meeting, and then children and teachers attended the place of worship to which they belonged, and sung the hymns written for them. A portrait of Mr. Raikes was engraved on steel to be used at the Jubilee gatherings, and medals were struck to be distributed among the children, bearing this inscription :—

ROBERT RAIKES,

FOUNDER OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS ;

Born at Gloucester, September 14th, 1735.

At Gloucester it was a great day. Besides the prayer meeting and morning service, a dinner was

given at noon to a thousand children. In the evening there was a teachers' tea and a public meeting, with many addresses. Two of these addresses were delivered by teachers who had themselves been scholars in Mr. Raikes' school.

The writer of these pages, then very young, cannot describe this "Sunday School Jubilee," which took place nearly fifty years ago, because at the time she had a dear sick brother, nine years old, who was dying from the effects of a blow from a cricket ball on his head while at school. In one week from the date of the "Sunday School Jubilee" his death took place, and everything else was forgotten in that time of sorrow. But there are, no doubt, many still living who were Sunday scholars at that time, and who can remember the joyful day and all its gatherings, on which the grain of mustard seed, sown by Robert Raikes, had grown to such a large tree.

And what will be the rejoicings now that twice fifty years have passed, and the Sunday School Tree has spread its branches over the whole world, never to be shaken or destroyed, because its roots have struck deep in a soil that never faileth?

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